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HARTMANN VON AUE'S
"GREGORIUS: DER GUTE SÜNDER"

BY

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ABSTRACT

OF

HARTMANN VON AUE'S "GREGORIUS: DER GUTE SÜNDER"

In this thesis an attempt has been made to show how the previous research concerning Hartmann's poem Gregorius, discussed in Part I, relates or does not relate to the main object of this study--an interpretation of the work itself. The first section of Part I, statements relating to the genesis of the text, investigates this area of research in an attempt to determine its underlying purpose, and concludes that any attempt to discover the immediate source of the poem or the sources of individual elements in the poem yields equally fruitless results in literary criticism. This conclusion is based on the fact that any attempt to discover how or why a work came into being is no longer a discussion of the work, but an attempt to discover the relationship between experience and art, i.e., to define artistic creation, and is thus a problem for the philosophers or the psychologists.

The second section of Part I deals with interpretative statements about the text. Except in rare cases, which are noted in the second half of the thesis, research in this area uses some external framework (Hartmann's life, the medieval Church, the conditions of the 'times') as its foundation and allows this structure to condition the ensuing interpretation. The main criticism of this approach is that the external framework is not verifiable and as a result any

statement based on it can neither be proved nor disproved.

The second half of the thesis takes, as its starting point, some observations made by these critics about the function of God and society in the poem, but instead of looking to an external source for verification, bases all statements on the text itself. In order to make a more adequate statement about the text, two further patterns, rât and family relationships, have been abstracted. Finally an attempt has been made to indicate the interrelationships among these patterns. The conclusion reached about the meaning of the poem does not vary to any great extent from conclusions reached by other critics--i.e., that it is a poem about God's mercy and about sin and redemption--but this statement is no longer a broad generalization. It has been possible, through close analysis of the text, to describe the particular manifestation of God's mercy and the nature of sin and redemption within the context of this poem.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
I. CRITICISM TO DATE	2
A. Genesis of the Text	2
1) Sources and Parallels	3
2) Choice of Text	12
B. Partial Interpretations with Reference to External Frame- works.	17
1) Biographical Framework	17
2) Religious Framework	21
3) Socio-Historical Framework	38
II. ANALYSIS OF "GREGORIUS"	46
A. Abstraction of the 'got-êre' pattern	47
B. Investigation of the use of the word 'rât'	
1) Abstraction of the 'rât' (advice) pattern	66
2) "rât" used to denote pro- visions for life	75
C. Examination of the pattern of family relationships	84
Conclusion	91
BIBLIOGRAPHY	94

Introduction

This thesis is divided into two main parts: the first, a critical survey of the previous criticism of Hartmann's poem Gregorius, and the second, an analysis of the text. The first section of Part I queries the relevance of research into the genesis of the text for literary criticism. The second section of Part I, which deals with interpretative statements based on external frameworks, investigates the arguments and attempts to point out the weaknesses inherent in them. Part II of the thesis concentrates on a close analysis of the text itself. One of the main preoccupations of previous criticism--the God-World dichotomy--constitutes the starting point of this investigation, but is discussed in entirely different terms within the framework of the 'got-êre' pattern. Two other patterns, 'rât' and family relationships, are abstracted and related to the first pattern in an attempt to make an adequate and verifiable statement about the meaning of the text.

PART I: CRITICISM TO DATE

A critical survey of previous criticism which deals with Hartmann von Aue's poem Gregorius will constitute the first section of this thesis. This in turn will be divided into two parts: the first dealing with statements related to the genesis of the text, the second with statements directed towards an interpretation of the text.

A. Genesis of the Text

Criticism to date concerning Hartmann's poem Gregorius has laid heavy emphasis on tracing isolated elements in the text to their supposed biographical, religious or socio-historical origins. Such pre-occupations result largely from the rather wide-spread belief in the evolution of literature which operates on the theory that the older a work is the less value it has as a piece of art and the more value it has as an historical, sociological or biographical document. With this in mind critics place considerable emphasis on determining not only the 'immediate source of the work but also in discovering where isolated elements in the work originated. Their research, however, is often based on an outdated and inadequate model of the relation between experience and art which invalidates their conclusions. Because medieval works are generally considered to be didactic, a direct relation between an isolated element and some biographical, or socio-historical 'fact' is believed to exist.

The following two chapters will deal first of all with some of the statements made about the various sources of Hartmann's work and of individual elements in the text, and secondly with some of the problems involved in selecting a text on which to base an interpretation.

1. Sources and Parallels¹

The first problem to be discussed in this section is the state of research concerning the immediate source of Hartmann's Gregorius. Two main schools of thought seem to have evolved over the years. Many scholars, notably Grimm, Kölbing and Seelish, favour as Hartmann's model, the treatment of the Gregorius legend found in the Gesta Romanorum.² The discovery of an Old French manuscript published by Victor Luzarche in 1857 at Tours under the title "Vie du pape Grégoire le Grand", however, largely displaced this view. In fact, the immediate reaction of many critics (i.e. Luzarche, Holzmann, Littré) was to regard Hartmann as a "modest" translator of the French poem. This point of view, however, has not been universally accepted. Piquet,³ for example, is aware of the strong resemblance between the two poems but gives Hartmann credit for some attempt at independent creation. He refers to Gregorius as an "imitation", not a translation, of the French poem. Many scholars dispute the whole idea that "Vie du pape Grégoire le Grand" constituted Hartmann's source. Neussell remarks about Strobl:

...er ist vielmehr geneigt, Grimm's Ansicht für die richtige zu halten, nur sieht er in dem lateinischen Gedicht nicht die unmittelbare sondern die mittelbare Quelle Hartmanns und vermutet, dass diesem eine dem Luzarche'schen Texte verwandte französische Bearbeitung vorgelegen habe.⁴

¹For this chapter I am much indebted to H. Sparnaay's work Hartmann von Aue (Halle, 1933, 1938) and to O. Neussell's dissertation Über die altfranzösischen, mittelhochdeutschen und mittelleng-
lischen Bearbeitungen der Sage von Gregorius (Halle a/S, 1886).

²cf. Sparnaay, 1933, I, p. 135.

³Piquet, 1898, p. 252.

⁴Neussell, 1886, p. 5.

Leitzmann¹ has more recently voiced the opinion that Hartmann's work and the French version as well might possibly be based on a Latin prose work. Sparnaay² on the other hand, though admitting that Hartmann's dependence on a French source cannot be conclusively proved, considers it "arbitrary conjecture" to set up a hypothetical Latin source in the light of existing evidence. He favours the hypothesis of a French rather than a Latin source but is aware of the discrepancies and feels that none of the existing manuscripts of the French poem could have been the sole source. Neussell³ notes that Lippold in his dissertation "Über die Quelle des Gregorius von Hartmann von Aue" (Leipzig, 1869), although voicing the opinion Hartmann's poem was not directly dependent on "Vie du pape Grégoire le Grand", makes no definite statement as to what the source might have been. Bartsch was apparently the first to take a positive step in this direction concluding that Hartmann's source was a French version closely related to the Luzarche version. The issue becomes more complex with Kölbing's discovery and examination of the English version of the legend.⁴ He was unable, however, to reach any definite conclusions as to its relationship with the French and German poems. Zwierzina,⁵

¹Leitzmann, PBB (1930), p. 358.

²Sparnaay, 1933, I, pp. 127ff.

³Neussell, 1886, p. 6.

⁴E. Kölbing, "Über die englische Version der Gregorlegende in ihrem Verhältnis zum französischen Gedicht", Beiträge zur vergleichenden Geschichte der Poesie und Prosa des Mittelalters, Breslau, 1876, pp. 42ff.

⁵Zwierzina, ZfdA, XXXV (1911), p. 365.

too, thought the English version could be of importance to the study of the German text but failed to be any more explicit. Following up this clue with a closer investigation, Sparnaay¹ found the corresponding elements to be negligible.

The concensus of opinion, then, seems to indicate that Hartmann's poem comes either from a Latin or a French source. Scholars now tend to favour the hypothesis of the French over the Latin source. Ehrismann's² summary can still be taken as a statement of the present generally accepted view on the subject. According to this, the Gregorius legend stems from the Old French poem "Vie du pape Grégoire le Grand" (of which there are five manuscripts) and furthermore:

Aus ihm stammt: 1. Das mhd. Gedicht Hartmanns, aus dem die beiden lat. Gedichte und die Prosa in Der Heiligen Leben, daraus die schwedische Übersetzung, geflossen sind. 2. Das englische Gedicht vom Anfang des 13. Jh.s (in 3 Hss.² überliefert). 3. Die lat. Prosa der Gesta Romanorum,....

Now that Hartmann's source has thus been narrowed down to the Old French poem, the problem is to decide which version of this poem he used. Although there are six extant manuscripts which fall into two main groups and are usually designated A₁, A₂, A₃, B₁, B₂ and B₃,³ it should not be assumed that these are the only ones which ever existed. The closest parallels have been noted with the manuscript B₁ but

¹Sparnaay, 1933, I, p. 140.

²Ehrismann, 1927, II, p. 188.

³For a discussion of the manuscripts and their relation to each other cf. Sparnaay, 1933, I, pp. 127/30.

Sparnaay¹ is somewhat doubtful as to whether this was Hartmann's direct source.

Das beliebte Gedicht wurde sicher oft abgeschrieben, und kaum eine Hs. mag den andern in allen Punkten genau entsprechen haben. Vermutlich also hatte H. eine frz. Hs. vor sich, die sicher zur B-Gruppe gehörte, deren Schreiber jedoch von einer A-Hs. beeinflusst worden war.

Neussell² feels that Hartmann used a text very closely related to the B₁ manuscript but that there must have been some other influence as well because this manuscript does not include the final episode. Using Hartmann's psychological make-up as criterion, he excludes the possibility of Hartmann having used B₂ which, although very similar to B₁ and including the final episode as well, has a far more detailed battle scene than either B₁ or Hartmann's version. He bases his conclusion on the assumption that such curtailing of detail would be incompatible with Hartmann's character. Sparnaay,³ too, feels that Hartmann's work is most closely related to the B₁ manuscript but he is careful to couch his statements in terms of probability rather than of fact. Although his schematic portrayal of the relationship between the different versions of the Gregorius legend is carefully worked out and seems quite tenable, Hartmann's direct source still remains a mystery. Even if we were absolutely certain of his source, what purpose would the information serve in a discussion of the work

¹Sparnaay, 1933, I, p. 145.

²Neussell (1886, p. 43) writes: "Eine solche Kürzung würde sich mit Hartmanns Charakter keineswegs vertragen."

³Sparnaay, 1933, I, pp. 139; 145.

itself? We have said nothing about the work; we have only partially explained how it came about.¹

The quest to determine the source of the individual elements of the work has also been the object of extensive scholarship. The problem is not as straightforward as is often assumed. Before beginning such a task some framework of reference must be set up to give direction and purpose to the project. If our interest is in the work itself we must always be conscious of this and, as Wimsatt² states, we must be aware of the fact that "there is a difference between a quotation or an allusion, something which has its full literary value only when it is recognized as such, and a simple borrowing, something which when recognized helps only to explain how the work came about." Unfortunately, when trying to trace individual elements to their sources this distinction is very often blurred and the scholar becomes involved with trying to find some parallel somewhere for every element in the story. In finding dozens of different references in many different cultures he is, in fact, saying nothing whatever about the work itself and, as these references were almost certainly unknown to the author, he is not even making any concrete biographical statement. At best he is in some very small way helping to prove the theory of the recurrence of themes or the essential unity of disparate cultures.

A noteworthy example of this type of scholarship is the attempt to answer the much disputed question as to whether or not the Gregorius

¹See below.

²Wimsatt, 1954, p. 261.

legend can be considered a medieval version of the Oedipus legend. Sparnaay,¹ in enumerating the differences between the two legends, and investigating the frequency with which incest themes occurred during that time in different cultures, concludes that although the poet was most certainly familiar with the Oedipus legend:²

so heisst das jedoch keineswegs, dass der Gregor nach Oedipus bearbeitet, dass letzterer zu einer legendenhaften mittelalterlichen Erzählung umgestalten worden ist. Abgesehen von dem völlig verschiedenen Charakter der beiden Werke sind auch die rein stofflichen Unterschiede sehr erheblich.³

He hypothesizes instead a close relationship between Gregor and a Persian legend⁴ on the basis of similarity not only in the main themes but in the secondary motifs as well. His conclusion, however, betrays the dubious nature of such conjecture:

Selbstverständlich ist, auch wenn man die Beziehung Dârâb-Gregorius gelten lässt, damit nicht das letzte Wort über den Ursprung der Gregorlegende gesagt, denn natürlich erhebt sich die Frage: woher hat Firdûsî sich seinen Stoff geholt?⁵

The tracing of many other elements in Hartmann's Gregorius to their sources has also been attempted. Sparnaay attributes the theme of the

¹Sparnaay (1933, I, pp. 148/64) investigates the frequency of pure incest themes, themes about the abandonment of children who are born of an incestuous relationship, and the more strictly **Oedipal** themes involving the abandonment of a child which later returns and commits incest with its mother.

²Ehrismann (1927, II, p. 190, note 2) documents the widespread familiarity with the Oedipus legend in the Middle Ages.

³Sparnaay, 1933, I, pp. 147/8.

⁴Sparnaay (1933, I, p. 155) justifies this assumption by reference to the interchange of ideas between oriental and occidental cultures during the 11th and 12th centuries.

⁵Sparnaay, 1933, I, p. 157.

long penance on the rock to an oriental influence.

Obgleich die Busse auf dem Stein in den Legenden des Abendlands sonst nicht nachgewiesen ist, kommt das Motif in einer Altern byzantinischen Legende vor und alle Wahrscheinlichkeit spricht dafür, dass der Gregordichter sie von dorthier übernommen hat.¹

In other words, seeing this parallel might help to document the theory of the exchange of ideas between the Orient and the Occident, a fact of cultural-historical interest. If our interest were in determining the beginnings and the development over the years of the Gregorius legend or in examining the relationships between cultures, this type of study might be valid. As Sparnaay points out, however, once Hartmann's sources were determined, we would have to determine the sources of these sources and so on 'ad infinitum'. This whole process is built on shifting foundations as there is no way of verifying the hypotheses. The texts themselves are often so fragmented that it is impossible to trace a pattern of development with any degree of certainty. On the other hand, if the researcher's main interest is the text, it must be remembered that every step backward towards a hypothetical source is a step further away from the actual work.

Attempts have also been made to attribute non-literary sources to many elements in the text. This will be dealt with in some detail in the sections concerning interpretations which make reference to external frameworks.² It will suffice here to indicate two of the

¹Sparnaay, 1933, I, p. 166.

²See below pp. 17ff.

more frequently travelled paths. In the first place many scholars have attempted, unsuccessfully, to find an historical model for the man Gregorius. Neussell finally comes to the conclusion that:

es dem Dichter nur darauf ankam, den guten Sünder zu einem hervorragenden Papste zu machen, ohne dabei an eine bestimmte Persönlichkeit zu denken;...¹

Secondly, the events of Gregorius' life and his way of thinking have been thought representative of Hartmann's own life and philosophy.² In other words, Hartmann himself embodies the source material for Gregorius. This may or may not be true but as it cannot be proved (i.e. we lack concrete biographical evidence of Hartmann's life) no definite conclusions can be drawn.

Research concerned with discovering Hartmann's sources, both direct and indirect, is characterized by a general indefiniteness of aims. The critic faced with a piece of literature must first decide what he wants to do with it. Almost invariably some attempt is made to talk about the text without having set up any framework of reference by which to measure the relevance of the statements to the study at hand. The only concrete evidence the critic has is the text itself. It would seem logical to use this as a point of departure, but even if the critic is interested in doing a biographical or an historical study, the only possible approach is a thorough analysis of the text. Abstracting isolated features is inadequate in criticism; their full significance can only be comprehended when the interrelationships among them are brought into focus. If a critic persists with these

¹Neussell, 1886, p. 4.

²See below pp. 17ff.

limited investigations some other justification must be claimed. Searching for sources is very often an attempt to discover how the work came about--an attempt to dissipate the mystery surrounding artistic creation. The basic concern here is the psychology of the artist rather than the implications of the text. Only in the case of direct quotation or allusion is it necessary to know the source (i.e. what is referred to) in order to grasp the full meaning. Even here, however, great care must be exercised in order not to lose sight of one's aim--an elucidation of the text--and become involved with a discussion of the source. H. B. Willson,¹ for example, has seen significance in the parallel between Gregorius and the parable of the Good Samaritan, but in asking such questions as why Hartmann chose this parable to illustrate his theme and whether or not it was an appropriate choice and if it can be reconciled with the "good neighbour" theme of the original, he directs his argument towards an analysis of the biblical version of the parable rather than concentrating on an examination of the statements in the text. The interest, having shifted from the idea expressed within the context of the poem to whether or not the idea of the original is conveyed in Hartmann's version, is now basically theological.

The question of an immediate source can perhaps be justified from a literary point of view. If there is an immediate source and the work to be dealt with is simply a direct translation, one may wish to discard the translation and turn instead to the original. If, on the other hand, the translation is still considered worthy of interpretation (every translation is of necessity an interpretation

¹Willson, MLR (1959), p. 196.

of the original and takes on individual characteristics of its own), the discovery of a primary source is of no significance. If the work is not a direct translation it might be interesting to note the variants and to try to determine whether or not they have structural significance. The fact that there is a model does not change the work to be dealt with, but it may serve to draw attention to certain elements which might otherwise have been ignored. The model, then, might serve as a tool to aid the interpreter; it cannot alter the meaning of the work itself.

2. Choice of Text¹

As the choice of a reliable text is of basic importance to any interpretation, some of the problems involved with regard to a study of Gregorius will be examined briefly. First of all, the term 'reliable' must be defined more precisely. In dealing with a medieval work there seem to be several roads open to the critic. In the first place he could choose one particular Ms. and work from that. This, however, would be to go beyond the confines of a purely literary study into the field of palaeography. Secondly he could base his interpretation on a diplomatic reprint of the Ms. or Mss. In the case of Gregorius such a reprint does not exist. The only alternative open to the critic, then, is to select some edition of the work. Here

¹For this chapter I am greatly indebted to Zwierzina's article in ZfdA, XXXVII (1893), "Überlieferung und Kritik von Hartmanns Gregorius" and to Dittmann's dissertation "Hartmanns 'Gregorius', Untersuchungen zur Überlieferung, zum Aufbau und Gehalt", Hamburg, 1960.

there are two choices. He may take the final authoritative eclectic edition, or he may select the edition which most closely reflects one Ms. Choosing the former amounts to attempting to grasp a chimera; a final authoritative edition does not yet exist.¹

In 1838 Lachmann published the first critical edition using the then known Mss. A and E. With the discovery of additional Mss. new editions have also appeared but the most recent finds have not yet been integrated. Today there are six more or less complete Mss. and five fragments which must be taken into consideration.² The thirteenth century Vatican Ms. (A)³ is the oldest and, aside from the prologue (ll. 1-170) and part of the epilogue (ll. 3973-4006), most complete extant version. This Ms. formed the basis of Lachmann's edition (1838) and, according to Dittmann, "ist bis heute die wichtigste Hs. für die Herstellung des kritischen Textes geblieben."⁴ The Strasbourg Ms. (B)⁵ which exists only in the form of an eighteenth century copy has as yet never been used to its fullest potentialities in textual criticism.⁶ Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact

¹Dittmann, like many others before him, wants his dissertation to be understood "als Vorarbeiten für eine spätere kritische Ausgabe", p. 7.

²Zwierzina discusses the relationship of the Mss. to each other (ZfdA, 1893, pp. 215ff.) and Dittmann brings the plan up to date by the inclusion of the then unknown Mss. B, L and M.

³For a complete history of Ms. A, see Leitzmann, "Zu Hartmanns Gregorius", PBB (1930), pp. 362ff.

⁴Dittmann, 1960, p. 10.

⁵Leitzmann, PBB (1930), pp. 359ff.

⁶Dittmann, 1960, p. 13.

date of the original, Dittmann places it "mit grossem Vorbehalt" in the fourteenth or fifteenth century.¹ This Ms., like A, has no prologue. The Vienna Ms. (E), used by Lachmann in conjunction with A for his edition, also lacks a prologue, the text itself is full of gaps and, according to Dittmann, at the same time more lines have been added than in any other Ms.² The Erlau Ms. (G), published by Franz Pfeiffer (1856), contains part of the prologue but is, on the whole, unreliable--aside from the fact that over 1400 verses are missing completely, the scribe has shortened the remaining text by at least 600 lines himself.³ The first known Ms. to contain the complete prologue--the Bern Ms. (J), published by Basil Hidber, PBB, III (1876), pp. 90/132--is thought to have been recorded in the fifteenth century. Although it contains the complete text, numerous gaps and additions lower its value for textual criticism. The latest more or less complete Ms.--the Constance Ms. (K) discovered in 1888 by Zwierzina--also contains the complete prologue and epilogue. In addition to these six fairly extensive Mss. there are five fragments not unimportant for the establishment of an up-to-date critical edition--the Veesenmeyer Fragment (C); the Salzburg Fragment (D); the Cologne Fragment (H); the Berlin Fragment (L); and the Waidhofner Fragment (M).⁴

Critics have not been daunted by the ever-expanding field of scholarship which surrounds the Gregorius Mss. and have carried on

¹Dittmann, 1960, p. 19.

²Ibid., p. 20.

³Ibid., p. 24.

⁴See Dittmann, 1960, pp. 38/50, for details of these fragmentary manuscripts.

in the Lachmann tradition in an attempt to arrive at an up-to-date critical edition. Hermann Paul, for instance, has made use of the Mss. A,B,C,D,E,G and H as well as the critical comments of Bartsch, Bech, Egger, Höfer, Lachmann and Pfeiffer in his 'Editio Magna' of 1873. Five further editions have appeared since 1882 under his direction in the 'Altdeutsche Textbibliothek'. Leitzmann¹ is responsible for the next three editions in the same series (second printing of the 8th edition in 1953) which take the newly discovered Mss. as well as the most recently acquired knowledge of medieval literature into consideration. He feels that Zwierzina's critical study of Gregorius will always be considered the basis for further research.

In view of this persisting uncertainty in textual criticism of Gregorius, it would seem logical to drop the attempt to find a final authoritative eclectic edition and select instead the edition which most closely reflects one Ms. This would also exclude those editions which, in an attempt to get closer to the original, have been 'improved' in accordance with some metrical, linguistic, or interpretative theory (i.e., Lachmann's edition was based largely on one Ms. but was extensively emended to comply with his own metrical theory). Neumann's edition² seems to fulfil these basic requirements.

¹Leitzmann, PBB (1930), p. 355.

²Friedrich Neumann, ed. Gregorius: Der "gute Sünder", by Hartmann von Aue (Wiesbaden, 1958).

Wapnewski's comment with regard to this text is significant.

Zu Neumanns Prinzipien bei der Gestaltung des Textes nur ein allgemeines Wort, denn die Ausgabe kann und will nicht kritisch sein, der Editor konnte und wollte seine Entscheidungen nicht jeweils einzeln begründen. Grundsätzlich geht Neumann konservativer vor als Paul und Leitzmann. In nicht wenigen Fällen verwirft er deren spätere Fassungen und trifft sich wieder mit dem Wortlaut der Grossen Paulschen Ausgabe. Der Hs. A schenkt er mehr Vertrauen als seine Vorgänger und entscheidet sich häufiger, als z.B. Zwierzina wollte, für deren Wortlaut. Die äusserlich deutlichste Abweichung von früheren Ausgaben besteht in der weitgehenden Bewahrung der unbetonten Nebensilben; Neumann meidet Synkopen, löst Kontraktionen, Krasis, Synalöphe usw. auf und versucht dadurch, dem unter dem starren Gesetz von Lachmanns Metrik geglätteten Text seine Ursprünglichkeit wiederzugeben--was freilich dessen Lesbarkeit nicht immer erleichtert.¹

This brief account assures us not only that Neumann bases his edition as far as possible on one Ms.--Ms. A--but also that he is comparatively reluctant to alter the Ms. in accordance with some theory which he has developed himself. If our concern, then, in choosing a 'reliable' text is in finding one which has undergone the least possible pre-interpretation, Neumann's edition can be accepted without any qualms.

¹Wapnewski, ZfdPh (1961), p. 228.

B. Partial Interpretations with Reference to External Frameworks

Interpretative work to date concerning Hartmann von Aue's poem Gregorius has centered more on the biographical, religious and socio-historical implications of the text than on any real attempt to interpret the work itself. The usual method of approach is to start with some known 'fact' about the external framework and to attempt to find a parallel in the work. As facts of this kind are singularly deficient with regard to the Middle Ages, however, the critic often resorts to circular arguments involving the extraction of 'facts' from the work, which he then uses as evidence to support his presuppositions about the external framework (i.e. medieval religion, Hartmann's life, the 'times') and later attempts to employ in an interpretation of the work.

Although this critical method in its non-literary emphasis has obvious shortcomings, more recently there has been the occasional partial interpretation based on one or the other of these frameworks, but with emphasis on a closer textual analysis, which, although extremely limited in scope, has produced some relevant statements. The concern of this section of the thesis will be to sum up the previous views about the text, Gregorius, to attempt to determine the underlying theory behind the various approaches, and to examine the usefulness of such theories for a textual analysis on literary lines.

1. Biographical Framework

The poem Gregorius, like many other medieval works, has often been treated as a biographical document (cf. the number of works

entitled "Hartmann von Aue"¹). Such studies are based on a rigid and inadequate model for the relation between experience and art. They assume that everything without a direct literary or historical source must have a direct biographical source. Piquet,² for instance, examines the differences between the French poem "Vie du pape Grégoire le Grand" and Gregorius and concludes that these elements are descriptive of events in Hartmann's life or indicative of his way of thinking. He readily assumes a close identity between Gregorius and Hartmann and feels justified in remarking that Hartmann obviously shared Gregorius' enthusiasm for courtly life. A. Wolf's comments indicate a similar trend of thought.

An der Art, wie Hartmann seine Hauptfigur vorstellt, wird seine Denkweise klar: der Einzelne ist der Träger der ewigen Wahrheit.³

The passage most often seized upon as indicative of one aspect of Hartmann's life is that which concerns Gregorius' schooling.

L. Wolff concludes from this passage:

Er [Hartmann] war religiös veranlagt und hatte eine theologische Bildung in einer Klosterschule erhalten--möglicherweise in dem Inselkloster der Reichenau (vgl. den Gregorius);...⁴

This same passage in the text (ll. 1155ff.) also seems to provide the basis for Nobel's⁵ conviction as to Hartmann's theological reliability, on which she builds her whole thesis about the interrelationship between Gregorius and early scholasticism. In contrast to Wolff, who simply

¹L. Wolff, P. Wapnewski and H. Sparnaay to mention three.

²Piquet, 1898, pp. 255/61.

³Wolf, WW (1962), p. 194.

⁴Wolff, WW (Sammelband II), p. 185.

⁵Nobel, ZfdPh (1957), p. 71.

extracts a biographical 'fact' to give evidence pertaining to the author, she uses the 'fact' in an attempt to make a further statement about the text. The circular thinking involved here is quite evident; it is less so when only half the process is visible--when the biographical 'fact' comes from some external source (usually one of his other works) and is then employed in an interpretation. The death of Hartmann's lord, for example, and later the Crusade of 1189 are usually regarded as being important and highly influential incidents in his life. These 'facts' are gathered from his lyrics. MF 209.25ff, for example, seems to substantiate the theory that Hartmann turned from a wordly to a spiritual life as a result of the death of his lord.

sît mich der tôt beroubet hât
des herren mîn,
swie nû diu werlt nâch im gestât
daz lâze ich sîn.

(MF 210.23/25)

This was apparently the turning point in his life and is reflected in what Wapnewski calls Hartmann's "gegenhöfische Wendung".¹ There is an obvious similarity between this poem and the first few lines of Gregorius (i.e., both discuss the foolish pursuits of youth) but the parallel goes no further. There is no evidence in Gregorius to support the theory of a complete rejection of the World. From another poem, MF 218.5ff., critics have gathered that Hartmann took part in the Crusade of 1189.

und lebt mîn herre, Salatîn und al sîn her
dienbraechten mich von Vranken niemer einen fuoz.²
(MF 218.19/20)

¹See below p. 41.

²Without the comma, which has been added for the sake of clarity, this passage can also be taken to mean "if my lord Salatîn and his army were alive they could not entice me away..." In other words this might

As Salatîn died before the Crusade of 1197, it is concluded that the earlier one, that of 1189, must have been the one in which Hartmann took part. The first few lines of the prologue are often seen in direct relation to these events. According to L. Wolff:

Nach der Rückkehr [from the Crusade of 1189] wird dann die Büsserlegende von Gregorius entstanden sein....Jetzt, wo ihn die Frage nach dem Jenseits mit der Sorge um das Seelenheil ergriffen hat, bereut er es, dass sein Herz und die Unerfahrenheit der Jugend ihn so viel haben dichten lassen, d a z n â c h d e r w e r l d e l ô n e s t â t. Die Gefahren, denen der Mensch zum Opfer fallen kann, wenn er sich nicht warnen lässt, werden an einem grellen Beispiel dargestellt; alle Werte irdisch-ritterlichen Lebens werden hier zum Fallstrick.¹

The biographical 'fact' at the root of this argument determines the whole ensuing interpretation. The critic presupposes a God-World opposition and is unable to see beyond it so that it conditions everything he abstracts from the text.

There are, then, two sides to the biographical approach to a study of Gregorius. The first is simply extracting details which seem to have biographical significance and attempting to draw up a composite picture of Hartmann; the second is using biographical evidence (whether gained from this poem or any other source) to shed light on the text. Both involve a circular kind of reasoning--from the text to the external framework (here Hartmann's life) and then back to the text to confirm the 'fact'. Circularity is, of course, inherent in inductive reasoning but allowance must be made for the continual modification of the hypotheses by the evidence at hand.

refer to a crusade a f t e r rather than before Salatîn's death.

¹Wolff, WW (Sammelband II), p. 187.

In this case provision must be made for the assumed knowledge of Hartmann's life to be modified by the evidence in the text. If the external framework remains rigid there can be no progression. Furthermore the model (here the assumed relation of experience to art) must always be subject to revision in accordance with the present state of knowledge.

2. Religious Framework

A background knowledge of medieval theology has been deemed by some critics an absolute necessity before even attempting to discuss Gregorius. There are several obtrusive arguments which seem to support this approach. First of all the traditional belief that Hartmann's works can be divided into two categories--worldly and religious--conditions the mind to accepting Gregorius as belonging to the latter class.¹ Because of the large number of biblical allusions, the extensive use of religious terms and expressions and the final outcome of the story, Gregorius' elevation to pope, it is not difficult to arrive at such a conclusion. Finally the repeated stress on the quality and magnitude of God's mercy throughout the poem serves as the conclusive argument in favour of a theologically orientated interpretation.

Interpretative statements on the religious level are concerned basically with three major issues: a) defining Hartmann's purpose,

¹See above pp. 19f.

Some critics have recently commented on the limitations of such vague categories. H. B. Willson, "Sin and Redemption in Hartmann's Erec", GR, XXXIII(1958), p. 5; K. C. King, "Zur Frage der Schuld in Hartmanns Gregorius", Euph., LVII (1963), p. 44.

b) determining the exact nature of Gregorius' sin, and c) investigating the possible allegorical significance of the prologue.

a) Didactic purpose:

One of the most widespread notions about medieval literature is that it was written for a definite, non-literary, non-imaginative purpose. This reasoning is clearly reflected in the words of Piquet:

La légende de "Grégoire" est, en effet, écrite dans le dessein de servir la religion.¹

In more specific terms, Piquet along with Schieb and Nobel regard the purpose of the poem as an attempt to illustrate the teaching that God will forgive even the most serious sin as long as one does not fall victim to despair.² Schieb and Nobel narrow the scope of the poem even further by confining this general theme within the boundaries of an even more limited framework. They feel that Hartmann had a much more specific lesson to teach--the correct procedure as advocated by the Church to gain absolution. Schieb states:

Es scheint Anliegen des Dichters, diese kirchliche Beicht- und Busspraxis in einer Dichtung zu vertreten und anschaulich zu machen.³

Nobel, too, speaks in similar terms about Hartmann's didactic aims.⁴

Hugo Kuhn⁵ sees the problem from a somewhat different angle but still

¹Piquet, 1898, p. 245.

²Nobel, ZfdPh (1957), p. 71.

Piquet, 1898, p. 245.

Schieb, PBB (1950), p. 53.

This conclusion is based on lines 162ff. of the prologue and its validity or at least its adequacy is never questioned.

³Schieb, PBB (1950), p.53.

⁴Nobel, ZfdPh (1957), p.47.

⁵Kuhn, DU (1953), p. 20.

speaks in terms of the author's intentions which, in agreement with Nobel and Schieb, he conceives of as an attempt to illustrate the procedure involved in order to attain eternal life. Although less dependent on the formal rituals of the Church, his elucidation of the text is nonetheless based on Church teaching. The road to salvation seen from this point of view involves being prepared for death at all times, recognition of the deadly sins of pride and despair, and repentance and confession within the framework of the Church. Here the main emphasis is placed on the conduct of the individual whereas Schieb and Nobel were more interested in the institution of the medieval Church and the teachings it imposed upon the individual.

Regarding Gregorius in terms of what the author intended implies that he accomplished what he set out to do¹ and immediately superimposes a rigid and rather narrow framework on the work which it does not deserve.² If Hartmann really did intend to illustrate the path from sin to redemption as seen by the Church, Nobel and Schieb are quite justified in their hypothesis that Gregorius must have committed some act which would be considered sinful in the eyes of the Church--either that, or one must assume Hartmann's knowledge of theology to be deficient.³ Nobel is acutely aware of this

¹Nobel, ZfdPh (1957), p. 53, writes: "Hartmanns Zweck, nämlich den Weg der Busse bildlich zu machen, wird vollkommend erreicht."

²Should the work prove to a greater or lesser degree incompatible with the imposed framework, it is more common to speak of the deficiencies of the text than to question the validity of the framework. Sparnaay (1938, II, pp. 74/7), for example, uses the author's youth and inexperience as criteria in an attempt to explain away a seemingly paradoxical situation.

³Nobel, ZfdPh (1957), pp. 46/7, rules out this possibility

dilemma:

Denn seine [Hartmanns] These, dass Gott alle wirklich bereute Schuld, sei sie auch noch so gross, vergibt und nachlässt, wird ja durch die Erzählung nur bewiesen, wenn es sich um eine wirkliche persönliche Schuld handelt.¹

This problem has worried many critics and forms the basis of much research directed towards the discovery of Gregorius' "personal" guilt.

b) Gregorius' sin:

The kinds of sin previous scholarship has attributed to Gregorius may be roughly grouped into two main categories: some manifestation of the sin of pride, or a perpetuation of original sin.

Among those critics who see Gregorius' sin as overweening pride are Nobel and Schieb who regard, albeit with some reservation, as the concrete manifestation of this, his wilful disregard of the instructions on the tablet.² Schieb writes:

Hartmann wollte, da die volkstümlichen Anschauungen seiner Quelle theologisch nicht mehr haltbar waren, Gregorius mit

basing his argument on the supposed biographical fact that Hartmann had a good theological education. King, Euph. (1963), pp. 46/7, objects: "Schon Zwierzina, Schönbach und Hauck haben sich dahin geäußert, dass Hartmanns Theologie nicht immer einwandfrei sei, und bis diese gewichtigen Bedenken restlos beiseitigt sind, hat man nicht die Berechtigung, eine These aufzubauen auf der Grundlage, Hartmann sei geschulter Theologe gewesen und habe nach streng orthodoxer Anschauung gedichtet."

¹Nobel, ZfdPh (1957), p. 71.

²Willson, MLR (1959), pp. 198/9, also sees Gregorius' guilt in his failure to obey the instructions on the tablet. In this case, however, the tablet has a far deeper significance; it is seen as a symbolic representation of God's Law. Gregorius is not simply disobeying his mother's wishes, he is breaking God's Commandments.

einer persönlichen Schuld beladen, und die besteht wohl darin, dass er sich wissentlich und willentlich dem Wunsch der Mutter zu stellvertretender Busse¹ entzieht und der "superbia" in seinem Leben Raum gibt.

King² takes exception to this line of reasoning pointing out that Gregorius had never been commanded to devote his life to prayer for his parents--the inscription on the tablet is not at all clear with regard to this--there is only a very minor connection with the incests, and even the Church would not consider such a human failure very serious. Even Nobel³ admits that there is no definite Church law which stipulates the correct conduct under such circumstances, but feels Gregorius had no other choice once he knew of his origins but, out of filial love and dutiful obedience towards his parents, to follow a spiritual life in the monastery. Schieb,⁴ too, constructs her hypothesis on the premise that the very act of reading the tablet burdens Gregorius with a definite, inescapable duty towards his parents. She regards Gregorius' guilt in terms of the first sin against the Holy Ghost (spoken of in the prologue)--Gregorius attempts to put off doing penance for his parents until after he has satisfied his own desires.

Although accepting the idea that Gregorius is in fact innocent in the eyes of the Church, Wapnewski,⁵ too, feels that his future behaviour is determined by the circumstances of his birth--he must

¹Schieb, PBB (1950), p. 57.

²King, Euph. (1963), p. 48.

³Nobel, ZfdPh (1957), pp. 71; 77.

⁴Schieb, PBB (1950), pp. 56/8.

⁵Wapnewski, 1964, p. 81.

share his parents "infamia" and, because of the fact that he is given a set of rules to follow, his future conduct is more or less determined.

Nicht also durch das Faktum seiner sündigen Geburt, sondern auch durch ausdrücklichen Auftrag der Mutter ist Gregorius die Aufgabe der Entsühnung seiner Eltern vermacht.¹

Instead of accepting his duty, self-love drives him to search for himself rather than allowing him to sacrifice himself humbly for the sake of his parents.² Perhaps Piquet expresses this idea most simply. Gregorius sins in that instead of following his mother's wishes:

il poursuit un vain rêve de gloire. Il aspire à l'honneur mondain.³

However, in order to comprehend fully why Gregorius felt it necessary to take on such a severe penance one must, according to Piquet, take the strictness with which the medieval Church dealt with the sin of pride into consideration.⁴

Another group of critics has regarded what might be termed "defiance of the order" as the manifestation of Gregorius pride. Maurer⁵ claims Gregorius was unfaithful to the spiritual order--an office to which he was chosen by God. The question as to whether or not he had any right to choose his own pathway through life has been discussed extensively with reference to this problem. According to

¹Wapnewski, 1964, p. 81.

²Ibid., p. 82.

³Piquet, 1898, p. 265.

⁴Although Gregorius was indeed aware that he had sinned, there is no indication in the text that he considered his sin to be that of pride.

⁵Maurer, Euph. (1950), 176/7.

Willson and Wapnewski¹ he still had "free will"--the freedom to choose either the right or the wrong way--but his choice to enter the world instead of remaining in the monastery was the wrong one, in so-doing he had chosen his own destruction. Wapnewski's short summary of the theme of Hartmann's story lacks all contact with any evidence in the text.

Der "Gregorius" ist die Geschichte von dem Menschen, der seinem angeborenen Schicksal ausweichen wollte--und ihm um so furchtbarer verfiel. Die Geschichte von dem Menschen, der nicht für die Welt bestimmt war, sondern für die Abgeschiedenheit, nicht für Glanz und Sieg, sondern für Armut und Einsamkeit. Da er² aber doch die Welt begehrte, wurde er aus ihr verstossen.

Had the story ended at this point, i.e. with Gregorius dying in the wilderness, this summary would perhaps be more valid; as it stands, it ignores completely the actual outcome when Gregorius once again takes his place, not simply in society, but at the head of society. Wapnewski realizes that something is wrong with his reasoning, but is so caught up with his first impression that he cannot allow the significance of his own observations to make any real impression on him.

Dass freilich Verschuldung, Sünde und Sturz die notwendigen Voraussetzungen sind für endlich die glorreiche Erhebung: dass die Schuld sich letztlich as "felix culpa" erweist,

¹Willson, MLR (1959), p. 199, note 4.

Wapnewski, 1964, p. 84.

The implications of the text itself, particularly Gregorius' elevation to pope are nonchalantly disregarded.

²Wapnewski, 1964, p. 85. Such a statement presupposes extra-sensory qualities on the part of the critic who is capable not only of envisioning what would have happened had Gregorius chosen the other course of action but the full extent of God's plan as well.

das Ausweichen vor dem auferlegten Schicksal mithin schliesslich als Erfüllung des auferlegten Schicksals erscheint, ist eine Erwägung, die weniger auf den Plan der Dichtung als auf den Glauben an den Heilsplan Gottes zielt.¹

Although actually perceiving the positive side of Gregorius' sin, he is unable to see its function in the structure of the work. Instead he sets up two entities, Hartmann's beliefs and Hartmann's plan for the poem, and decides to relate his observation to the former. Since both entities are pure speculation, the decision is academic.

Willson² also feels that God had selected Gregorius to lead a religious life and that his decision to leave the monastery, which interfered with His plan, was a clear manifestation of the sin of "superbia". Like Wapnewski, his preoccupation with attributing some kind of personal guilt to Gregorius blinded him to the obvious--that in leaving the monastery Gregorius committed an act necessary to his final elevation to pope. Neumann alone seems to have been conscious of this fact:

Gerade indem Gregorius aus dem Kloster scheidet wird er letztlich zu dem Sohne, der den Wunsch der Mutter nach einem entsühnten Dasein in einer nicht erahnbaren Beglückung erfüllt.³

Surely if this is the case, if breaking out of the order (i.e. leaving the monastery) in fact leads to Gregorius' elevation to pope (as is definitely implied in the text), it cannot be said that he chose the road to destruction.⁴ Indeed close textual analysis leads

¹Wapnewski, 1964, p. 85.

²Willson, MLR (1959), p. 199.

³Neumann, ed., 1958, p. 33.

⁴See p. 27, note 1 above.

away from this type of reasoning. Schönbach¹ was perhaps the first to acknowledge the importance of the two incests. He regarded Gregorius' guilt quite simply as partly inherited and partly unconsciously committed and gave no more than passing consideration to whether or not Gregorius was guilty in the eyes of the Church--in the consciousness of the individual and society, the incests themselves were enough to warrant the long period of penance.

...da war schon die Abstammung aus der Blutschande eine Makel, die schwer getilgt werden konnte, und der Inzest ersten Grades, den Gregor mit seiner Mutter unwissend begieng, ein Gräuel vor Gott und der Welt.¹

Schönbach has made an astute observation, however, he has chosen to substantiate his theory by making reference to the external framework of traditional opinion² rather than relying entirely on the text which in itself offers adequate support. King³ comes to the same conclusion about the two incests but bases his statements on structural evidence furnished by the text itself.

A closer examination of the implications of the two incests has led several critics to put forth a tentative theory concerning the inheritance of sin; and others, in postulating a connection with original sin, have carried these views to their logical conclusion.

¹Schönbach, 1894, p. 102.

²See below p. 39.

³King, Euph. (1963), p. 48.

After having made the statement about the central importance of the incests and how Hartmann stressed them through literary means, King, too, retreats to the more traditional stand--a socio-historical account of why incest may safely be regarded as Gregorius' sin (see pp. 64;66). See below p. 39.

L. Wolff¹ hinted at the idea that Gregorius inherited his sin from his parents along with their blood but still felt his main guilt lay in the fact that he had turned from God to a worldly life. Klöckner² conceived Gregorius sin in very lucid terms--it was simply his incestuous birth--but refrained from making any further comment on the subject. King³ took another step in the same direction--Gregorius' sin was not so much his incestuous birth, but simply the fact of his birth and life.

...der Mensch ist sündhaft, und wenn er sich als Mensch betätigt, wird er in Schuld verfallen--daß mag man Erbsünde, oder, etwa mit Fr. Maurer, „Leid“ nennen.

Gregorius is seen as representative of the human race burdened with sin from birth. The second incest, in that it is completely beyond his control, is a further manifestation of the helplessness of man.

Willson⁴ was also aware of the connection with original sin but expressed it in more concrete terms--in terms more closely related to the text--rather than in vague generalities. He saw a definite parallel between Gregorius' parents and Adam and Eve in that both pairs were of the same flesh and blood and both fell into sin as a result of being tempted by the devil. He regarded Gregorius as having been born in sin, and conceived this sin and the later incest in terms of "personal" sin in that they represented, in

¹Wolff, WW (Sammelband II), 1962, p. 187.

²Klöckner, 1948, p. 45. Although not definitely stated, the implication is that Gregorius inherited his sin from his parents.

³King, Euph. (1963), p. 65.

⁴Willson, MLR (1959), p. 198.

his opinion, a perpetuation of original sin (his definition of personal sin).

Having discussed the different opinions on the exact nature of Gregorius' guilt, it might be useful to attempt a brief summary. If one ignores the varying opinions on the particular manifestation of his sin (not obeying the instructions on the tablet, defying the order), one might come to the conclusion that Gregorius was guilty of the deadly sin of pride. If, on the other hand, the first incest be allowed its rightful place of importance, Gregorius' guilt as a manifestation of original sin would be a more probable conclusion. Using elements found in the text as basic criteria for all statements about the work would practically rule out the first conclusion and demand recognition of the second. Gregorius' guilt, however, still remains shrouded in very vague terms and no attempt as yet has been made to relate this element to the rest of the text. Although it is indeed an important aspect of the text, it is not the text.¹

c) The prologue:

Many critics who attempt to interpret Gregorius on the religious level have selected the prologue as their point of concentration. Before examining the statements of some of these critics in detail, an attempt will be made to define what seem to be the three basic attitudes towards the function of the prologue.

In the first place there are some critics who feel that the prologue has no function at all in relation to the rest of the work.

¹This question is taken up in the second half of this thesis. See below pp. 57f.

Dittmann,¹ for example, excludes the prologue from his analysis on the grounds: firstly, that the prologue is not necessarily an integral part of a medieval work and secondly, that the poet himself clearly indicated the division from the rest of the poem. He is referring to lines 174ff. which seem to denote the beginning of the story about the 'good sinner'. These lines definitely indicate a transition, but to say there is no interrelationship between the two 'parts' is to deny them their complete function. He emphasizes only one aspect of transition--i.e. that of division.

Other critics regard the prologue from the diametrically opposite point of view and treat it as an integral part of the text. Although it is customary to designate the first one hundred and seventy lines of the poem as the 'prologue', Willson² insists that no real division exists, that structurally the prologue and the story are continuous. He emphasizes, then, the other aspect of the transition--i.e. that of continuity. He remarks that the parable, restricted to its outline form in the 'prologue', is taken up again in the main body of the poem and elaborated on throughout the rest of the story. King,³ too, feels that there is a close relationship between elements in the prologue and elements in the rest of the text--with the reservation that the first thirty-four lines are subjective statements about the author and are thus not important for an interpretation.

The third attitude towards the prologue has been to regard it as a separate entity, but at the same time to insist on its basic

¹Dittmann, 1960, pp. 169/70; 180.

²Willson, MLR (1959), p. 195.

³King, Euph. (1963), p. 62.

significance to any interpretation. The function of the prologue in the eyes of both Neumann and Schieb is to elucidate the story from the author's point of view. In other words, the narrator (equated with the author) is set up as the authoritative critic--a presupposition which can be proved inadequate by reference to the text alone. Schieb's view of the prologue and epilogue as instruments of clarification is particularly revealing.

Nichts ändert daran die Tatsache, dass der Dichter theoretische Gedankengänge an die alte Legende heranbrachte, die nicht in allem zu ihr passten. Daher die entscheidende Bedeutung von Prolog und Epilog für uns. Dort konnte der Dichter frei und ungehemmt schalten und uns mit der ihm eigenen Klarheit und scholastischen Sicherheit den Gang der Dichtung in seinem Sinne selbst deuten.¹ (emphasis mine)

She actually states that the prologue is decisive in interpretation because it does not interpret the story accurately. In attempting to arrive at what the author intended, she advocates ignoring part of what he wrote.

Of those critics who consider the prologue worthy of mention, most comment upon what is commonly considered to be Hartmann's version of the parable of the Good Samaritan. For Schieb² this parallel with the Bible presents no enigma. It is simply an image used to elucidate later events--an "allegorical preview" of the contents, in which the victim of the robbers is Gregorius and the wounds are the symbolical representation of his sins. King³ also sees an unproblematical relationship between the parable outlined in the prologue

¹Schieb, PBB (1950), p. 64.

²Ibid., p. 53.

³King, Euph. (1963), p. 63.

and the course of events in Gregorius' life.

...(1) der Überfall und die Verwundung (Samariter), verbunden mit dem erforderlichen Gemütszustand, einer Gabe Gottes, (2) die Rettung und Heimtragung (guter Hirte), (3) Versetzung in hohes Amt; dass diese drei Punkte erstens in der Sünde des Gregorius und seiner Gemütsverfassung, zweitens in der Rettung vom Stein und drittens in der Erhebung auf den Papststuhl ihre genaue Entsprechung haben, ist selbstredend.¹

Not all critics, however, have adopted such an uncomplicated view of the significance of the parable. The discrepancies between Hartmann's treatment and the biblical version have been noted and dealt with in a variety of ways. In the first place there are those critics who, seemingly following the line of least resistance, make no attempt of any kind to examine the differences closely or to discover their function within the poem but simply attribute them to the ignorance of the author. Sparnaay, for example, concludes that, in spite of Hartmann's theological knowledge:

Seine Vertrautheit mit dem theologischen Schrifttum war jedoch nicht so gross, dass er sich nicht gelegentlich gründlich irren konnte, wie in seiner Behandlung der Parabel vom barmherzigen Samariter in der Einl. zum Gregor, 97ff.²

A second group of critics attempt to explain this discrepancy by reference to additional sources. Dittmann³ notes two points of variance from the traditionally accepted version of the Good Samaritan. The first, couched in purely descriptive terms, concerns the introduction of the two pieces of clothing--"gedinge" and "vorhte"--the second, more subjectively explanatory than descriptive, is described as the

¹King, Euph. (1963), p. 63.

²Sparnaay, 1938, II, p. 95.

³Dittmann, 1960, p. 165.

confusion and intermingling of the parable with the parable of the Good Shepherd and its exegesis. Bennholdt-Thomsen¹ takes this approach to its extreme in his article "Die allegorische „kleit" im Gregorius-Prolog" (Euph., 1962, pp. 174/84). He feels that the parable of the Good Samaritan is inadequate to convey the theme of Hartmann's allegory--God's mercy plus repentance on the part of the individual make absolution of any sin possible--and that further clarification must be sought. The motifs of repentance and the gift of clothing are then explained by reference to the parable of the Prodigal Son. The parable of the Good Samaritan, however, retains its position of importance even though in its biblical form Christ uses the allegory to illustrate the concept of 'neighbour' and the victim is entirely innocent of any wrongdoing. Bennholdt-Thomsen seems to be aware of this. He feels that Hartmann's allegory could not be based on the biblical version, but that the exegesis, an interpretation which regards Adam as the victim and Christ as the Good Samaritan, could have been one of Hartmann's sources.

Nur auf Grund dieser Deutung konnte H. das Samariter-Gleichnis für sein Thema verwenden. Adam als der erste Schuldige und der Schuldige schlechthin ist auch noch geeigneter als der verlorene Sohn.¹

The main elements, then, can be explained by reference to the parable of the Prodigal Son and to the exegesis of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The motif of the stolen clothes, however, still remains obscure. They are referred to in the text, line 103, as "aller sîner sinne kleit". Although Bennholdt-Thomsen accurately notes that

¹Bennholdt-Thomsen, Euph. (1962), p. 178.

there is no further explication of the stolen clothes, he goes on to explain, by reference to contemporary theology, what meaning the line was probably intended to convey. In order to illustrate his trend of thought clearly it will be necessary to quote the full argument.

Bis zu den zeitgenössischen Predigten sind die geraubten Kleider immer "immortalitas" und "innocentia" und zwar seit Beda. Beda sieht sie auch als Gegensatz zu dem, was nicht geraubt werden kann, zum "sensus rationis". Es besteht also ein bestimmter Zusammenhang zwischen den Begriffen "immortalitas" und "innocentia" und dem Begriff "sensus rationis". Wenn [emphasis mine] daher Hartmann den Begriff "sinne" für das, was nicht geraubt wird, dem "sensus rationis" bei Beda gemäss verwendet, kann man annehmen, dass er auch für die geraubten Kleider Bedas Begriffe voraussetzt.... Wir nehmen einen genetivus obiectivus an, halten "sinne" für eine Übersetzung des "sensus rationis" bei Beda und vermuten entsprechend hinter den geraubten Kleidern selbstverständlich [emphasis mine] Bedas Begriffe "immortalitas" und "innocentia".¹

The 'fact', then, that the stolen clothes are traditionally taken to mean "innocentia" and "immortalitas" gives rise to the whole specious argument. Whether or not Hartmann used the term "sinne" in the same sense as Beda used "sensus rationis" is highly debatable. To use this assumption as the basis of still another hypothesis can only result in a totally unfounded conclusion in spite of the seemingly logical, step-by-step process involved. Bennholdt-Thomsen proceeds to destroy his own argument by observing in his next statement that in its explicit details (i.e. the clothes bestowed on the victim) Hartmann's allegory deviates from Beda's. If explicit details are not the same, it is surely highly questionable to assume implicit identity elsewhere. By referring to other parables and to their

¹Bennholdt-Thomsen, Euph. (1962), p. 180.

interpretations and to contemporary theology, Bennholdt-Thomsen has not arrived at a more profound interpretation of Hartmann's allegory. The usefulness of such research, because it is concerned basically with only a few lines of the text and no attempt is made to examine the function of the allegory within the context of the text as a whole, is seriously limited from the beginning.

The third way of dealing with the discrepancies which exist between Hartmann's allegory and the biblical version of the parable of the Good Samaritan is to ignore them entirely--to insist on treating the allegory as a product of a creative imagination rather than constantly checking it against some external authority. Willson advocates this point of view.

Because the poem as a whole is Hartmann's own and designed as a vehicle for his symbolic message, so also must the parable be viewed as his creation, for the poem is the parable and the parable is the poem.¹

The only fair way of dealing with the parable, then, is to examine it in its relation to the following narrative.²

Interpretations on the religious level have been basically concerned with three problems--Hartmann's purpose, the theme of sin and redemption, and the meaning of the allegory in the prologue. Almost without exception, critics have made use of an external framework in their discussions of these topics. In dealing with the first question, vague knowledge of Hartmann's life seems to support the hypothesis that he was trying to convey a religious message.³ As

¹Willson, MLR (1959), p. 195.

²See below pp. 82f.

³See above pp. 22ff.

this information is drawn largely from his own literary works, however, the circular nature of the argument is clearly apparent. The second question is basically theological and research in this area has been more concerned with attempting to discover the relationship between the poem Gregorius and religious thought of that period.¹ The third area of interest, with rare exception, has as its standard the biblical version of the parable of the Good Samaritan and attempts to force Hartmann's allegory into this framework.² The variations are generally overlooked or in some way excused--not examined as to their function within the text. In all three approaches the central interest, ostensibly Hartmann's poem, is in fact directed towards the external framework.

3. Socio-Historical Framework

Criticism of Gregorius with reference to the biography of the author or to medieval religious thought has proved inadequate to explain all or even many of the elements in the text. In an attempt to correct this deficiency, some critics have resorted instead to the use of historical or sociological criteria to support their interpretations. Due to the paucity of historical records concerning this period, the poem is often treated first as if it were a sociological or an historical document from which various 'facts' could be extracted and then these 'facts' are used in an attempt to clarify isolated elements in the poem. When knowledge of the 'times', real or imaginary, does exist (possibly from some other literary source), this is

¹See above pp. 24ff.

²See above pp. 31ff.

also employed in an elucidation of the text.

Both Schönbach and King,¹ aware of the inadequacy of the theological explanation, use the criterion of traditional opinion (volkstümliche Meinung) in an attempt to determine the exact nature of Gregorius' sin. King² attempts to support his argument on the basis of the structural importance of the two incests, but in the end retreats to the more traditional stand.

...er [Hartmann] nimmt an, dass seine Zuhörer die volkstümliche Meinung über die Blutschande, als unter allen Umständen sündhaft und abscheulich, teilen werden, und er gestaltet die Handlung dementsprechend.²

According to King, then, it was not necessary for Hartmann to actually state that the incest was Gregorius' sin, as the society of that period regarded such a relationship with complete abhorrence and would therefore need no further explanation. As Gregorius' attitude towards incest, however, is clearly indicated in the text itself, drawing on the opinion of society, which cannot be substantiated, adds nothing to our understanding of the situation.

Schönbach,³ in an attempt to explain why Gregorius was willing to risk so much in the battle with the count, again makes reference to the framework of popular belief. Gregorius, as a foundling, had the status of an illegitimate child but, according to a traditional view of the law (Schönbach cites Sachsenspiegel 1, 38, 3), he could regain his legitimate status through success in chivalric combat. It is clear from the text, however, that Gregorius is concerned with

¹See above p. 29 and note 3.

²King, Euph. (1963), p. 64.

³Schönbach, 1894, p. 302.

êre in general, not specifically with legitimacy. There is no evidence to justify limiting the implication of his words "sô bin ich êren rîche" (l. 2061) to such a narrow interpretation.

The frequent occurrence of the terms êre and minne has been explained by reference to another external framework--that of 'medieval thought' which is assumed to be fundamentally different from modern thought. The term êre, for instance, seems to have had a special connotation in the Middle Ages. Dittmann states:

'êre' ist nicht nur Reputation; ihr Verlust bedeutet im mittelalterlichen Denken zugleich die Zerstörung des inneren Adels.¹

He makes use of this hypothesis to excuse the girl for submitting silently to her brother's advances. The real dilemma, however, was not whether she would retain her honour, but whether she would do what she knew was right or submit to evil. Dittmann's framework of 'medieval thought', based on the premise that certain concepts had different connotations in the Middle Ages, is an inadequate explanation of this incident, which is concerned with absolute rather than relative values. In any case, the meaning of a word cannot be restricted to one rigid definition; it is continually modified by the way in which it is used. In order to determine the function of a word such as êre, it must be examined in all its various contexts.²

Other elements of the poem are discussed in terms of a tension between religious and secular, spiritual and worldly, clerical and courtly values. Here again, it is assumed that all medieval thinkers

¹Dittmann, 1960, p. 190.

²See below pp. 47ff.

were preoccupied with the 'God-World' dichotomy, and that Hartmann's poem must be interpreted against the background of these preoccupations. Wapnewski¹ has abstracted this pattern from the poem, which he regards as highly critical of courtly society. The concepts minne and êre, which determine the basic pattern of the court, are described as tools of the devil. He states:

Diese beiden wichtigsten Glaubensartikel des höfischen Katechismus, die das Reich des Königs Artus ordnen,... werden im "Gregorius" verdammt.¹

This statement, however, is not based entirely on evidence found in the text. Wapnewski abstracts the very limited pattern that the poem began in the courtly atmosphere of Equitânjâ and ended in Rome, couples this with the biographical 'fact', which he describes as "Hartmanns gegenhöfische Wendung",² and concludes that the poem is a criticism of courtly society. This presupposition also affects his view of Gregorius' sin:

Hier wird einer gestraft, der sich der Gefährdung des ritterlichen Menschen nicht versagt,³ der sich dem Glanz der Welt bewusst hingegen hat;...

King⁴ also uses this criterion but does not conclude that Hartmann advocated either the wordly or the ascetic life. The fact that the mother is commanded to maintain her position in society while doing her penance is regarded as a tacit approval of the courtly way of life. Dittmann⁵ shares this opinion and concludes, after examining

¹Wapnewski, 1964, p. 82.

²Ibid., p. 84. See above p. 19.

³Wapnewski, ZfdPh (1961), p. 236.

⁴King, Euph. (1963), p. 57.

⁵Dittmann, 1960, p. 206.

the various stages through which Gregorius passed,

dass die Stationen nebeneinander stehen und nicht gegeneinander ausgespielt werden. Gregorius ist auf jeder Stufe vorbildlich, und Hartmann gibt jeder Daseinsform ihr relatives Recht.¹

A third external framework used to explain elements in the poem is, in very broad terms, the 'times'. This would include the historical background, social customs and religious practices of the period.² Schieb,³ for example, resorts to this kind of statement in her attempted clarification of line 3333 which concerns the fisherman's confession to a layman. She simply comments that such confessions were common practice in the Middle Ages. This type of short explanatory comment is very common among editors. Neumann, for instance, regards lines 1739/40 "sus vuorte in der getriuwe man/vil sêre weinende dan" worthy of comment:

In alter Zeit drückt der Mann leicht seine Erregung in Tränen aus.⁴

It is evident from the text that "weinende" is an expression of deep emotion. An enumeration of historical periods when such behaviour might be regarded as normal adds nothing to our understanding of the text. King⁵ uses the criterion of the 'times' in an attempt to explain Gregorius' long period of penance. Through no fault of his

¹Dittmann, 1960, p. 206.

²See above pp. 21/38 for a discussion of the religious framework which is too broad to be included here.

³Schieb, PBB (1950), p. 61.

⁴Neumann, ed. 1958, pp. 124/5.

⁵King, Euph. (1963), p. 66.

own he committed incest which was

eine für das damalige Empfinden besonders schwere Schuld.¹

The criteria on which King bases his assumption or the method used in measuring the sensibilities of the period are not elucidated.

The second facet of the socio-historical approach makes reference first to elements found in the poem, but instead of examining their interrelationships and functions within the text, uses them to give information about the external framework. Neumann notes with regard to lines 1102/5:

Man spürt das Zunehmen der² Geldwirtschaft im oberreinischen Gebiet am Ende des 12 Jhs.

Other critics, too, have expressed more interest in the socio-historical conditions of the period than in interpreting the work. Dittmann, for example, is not concerned with what implications the various stages of Gregorius' life had for the total meaning of the poem, but rather with the question:

Wie wertet H. die Daseinsstufen, die Gregorius durchläuft, das Mönchdasein, das Rittertum, das Leben des Büssers?³

Alois Wolf also notes the possibility of this type of investigation, i.e., an investigation whose main aim is to discover something about the times. He is careful, however, to couch his statements in terms

¹King, Euph. (1963), p. 66.

²Neumann, ed. 1958, p. 99.

³Dittmann, 1960, p. 170.

of possibility and to indicate clearly that any such information must be treated with reservation.

Hinter dem Dialog, wie ihn Hartmann gestaltet, darf man fassbare Realitäten suchen und nicht nur vage Anspielungen auf Klösterliches. So steht wohl hinter dem Abt das reale Mönchstum des 12. Jahrhunderts mit seiner vertieften Auffassung vom Christentum und seiner grossen Dynamik.¹

Conclusion

In the final analysis it must be admitted that the poem does reflect historical, sociological and religious aspects of the environment in which it was written. There is no question that historians are at liberty to look for their data in literary documents. In the process, however, they will quite naturally fail to respond to many aspects of form, and may be seriously misled. In this regard structural analyses by trained literary critics could be of help. It is simply not true that Gregorius reflects a medieval preoccupation with the horrors of incest, or the importance of legitimacy, or the tension between court and church, or the new twelfth century monasticism. Although these patterns can certainly be abstracted from the poem, the poem as a whole does not illustrate any one of them. In complete isolation these elements may have an entirely different connotation than when regarded in relationship to the rest of the work. The function of irony, for example, may be disregarded unless the whole context is taken into consideration. Before it is

¹Wolf, WW (1962), p. 200.

possible to make any adequate statement about the significance of the poem as a whole, whether it be historical, religious or literary, a structural analysis, i.e., a close examination of the elements in the text and their interrelationships, is necessary.

PART II: ANALYSIS OF GREGORIUS

In the first part of this thesis, which dealt with the various kinds of statements made about the poem Gregorius, one of the main criticisms of previous interpretations was their constant use of extraneously determined and rigidly upheld frameworks to elucidate isolated elements in the text, a practice which seriously limited the scope of their investigation.¹ To avoid this pitfall the following interpretation will be based entirely on an analysis of the text.

As previous examinations of Gregorius almost without exception have been concerned with its religious significance² and several critics have noticed the strong chivalric influence,³ I have taken these two elements as the starting point of my investigation. They constitute what I shall call the 'got-êre' pattern. From a closer examination of the text other structural elements emerge which, when treated in a similar way, lead to a more highly differentiated statement about the poem than does an interpretation based exclusively on a single aspect, such as religion. The second obtrusive pattern, the attitude of Gregorius and his mother towards rât, will be examined in its double connotation of 'advice' and 'provisions for life'. The third feature to be considered in the course of this analysis will be the pattern of family relationships which gradually emerges.

¹See above pp. 20/1.

²See above pp. 21/38.

³See above pp. 38/44.

In order to make an adequate statement about the meaning of the poem, the various patterns will then be examined in relationship to each other.

A. Abstraction of the 'got-êre' pattern

1) The attitude of Gregorius' mother towards religion and social convention.

The first piece of evidence in this regard is contained in the scene concerning the brother-sister incest. The young girl is aware of the choice with which she is faced and seems to foresee the consequences which could result from her decision.

<wie nû, bruoder mîn?
 wes wil dû beginnen?
 lâ dich von dînen sinnen
 den tiuvel niht bringen.>

 si gedâhte: <swîge ich stille,
 sô ergât des tiuvels wille
 und werde mînes bruoder brût,
 und werde ich aber lût,
 sô haben wir iemer mêre
 verloren unser êre.>
 (11. 380/90)¹

Her limited understanding of the complexity of the situation results in the incestuous relationship with her brother. She sees two choices: to remain silent and endanger her relationship with got, or to cry out and endanger her relationship with society. It is only the second consideration (l. 388), the effects of which can be perceived in concrete terms, which has an influence on her behaviour. Not

¹All quotations from Gregorius are based on Neumann's version of the text found in the Burkhard Kippenberg edition (Langewiesche-Brandt, 1959) and will be designated in future by line reference only.

being able to see beyond the most immediate problem (i.e., being forced out of her social framework), she chooses the most immediate solution and remains silent. At first this seems to have been adequate; she retains her social position and her new relationship with her brother (ll. 400ff.). The limitations of the solution do not become apparent until her social position is once again threatened--this time by the imminent birth of her child. At this point, religious considerations re-enter her thoughts.

bruoder, ich bin zwir tât
 an der sêle und an dem lîbe.
 ouwê mir armen wîbe,
 wâr zuo wart ich geborn?
 wande ich hân durch dich verlorn
 got und ouch die liute.
 (ll. 436/41)

Although she seems concerned with the death of her soul, the destruction of her life ("lîbe"), in that she has lost the favour of society ("die liute"), is of equal importance. The fact that the loss of her "sêle" is actually coupled with the loss of her position in society (êre) indicates that she regards the two as interdependent. It is apparent, however, that the loss of her position in society constitutes the key factor in her grief. There is no concern whatever for their spiritual welfare until the secrecy of their relationship is threatened. In other words, her spiritual concern is limited to her concern with êre.

The concern for the spiritual welfare of her child (ll. 469ff.) might also be cited as evidence of the depth and sincerity of her religious considerations. The argument, however, is weakened by the fact that, at this point, she already feels socially and spiritually 'dead' (ll. 436/7) and that this double 'death', which is seen as a

result of losing her êre, has been brought about by the child.

aber daz kint daz ich hie trage
daz tuot es wol den liuten kunt.
(11. 446/7)

Her concern for the child's well-being arises only when she despairs completely of ever being able to maintain her position in society. Her acceptance a few lines later of her brother's solution to the problem illustrates the rigidity of her code of behaviour. His words offer her consolation:

ich hân uns vunden einen rât
der uns zu staten gestât
ze verhelne unser schande.
(11. 487/89)

Although there is no mention of helping the child, she is satisfied with the prospect of being able to retain her social position. As neither can see beyond the immediate situation, the solution is restricted to finding a way to conceal the approaching birth.

The plan her brother has in mind is to seek the aid of an old man whom their father had recommended to them. The ludicrousness of his advice, which consists of ambiguous and contradictory statements, reflects the discrepancy present in their query. The penance he prescribes for the sister is an attempt, through compromise, to secure both got and êre.

belîbet si bî dem lande,
ir sünde und ir schande
mac si sô baz gebüezen.
(11. 603/5)

The failure to differentiate between "sünde" and "schande" points to a lack of understanding of the implications of both. His limited view of got and êre is further emphasized by the programme he sets

out for the girl to follow.

gebristet ir des guotes,
 sô enhât si niht wan des muotes:
 nû waz mác dāne ir muot
 gevrumen iemanne âne guot?
 waz touc der muot âne guot?
 óder guot âne muot?
 (11. 609/14)

The argument here concerning the impossibility of an effective penance being based solely on good intentions shows how closely religious considerations are bound up with and restricted by social considerations. The fact that the brother and sister accept the advice without hesitation illustrates their strong desire to remain within the rigid framework of their society. They agree to the separation in spite of the closeness of the relationship between them.

sus schieden sî sich beide
 mit grôzem herzeleide.
 enheten si niht gevürhtet got,
 si heten iemer der werlde spot
 gedultet vûr daz scheiden.
 (11. 637/41)

Although the words of the narrator would lead us to believe that fear of God governed their actions, an examination of the whole situation reveals the inadequacy of this explanation.¹ Their original decision to approach the 'wise old man' for advice was based entirely on their wish to preserve their honour--their position in society (11. 499/500). It must be remembered, however, that as loss of êre implies both spiritual and social death,² their desire to maintain the status quo

¹ King, Mediaeval German Studies (London, 1965), p. 87, in regarding line 639 as evidence of the fact that the brother and sister were concerned with religious problems, seems unaware of its ironic significance. He would disagree with my insistence that the sister's limited understanding of both got and êre is the prime factor in her decision.

² See above pp. 48/9.

and stay within the social framework by preserving their êre is an attempt to stay spiritually and socially alive. The above passage (ll. 637/41) in fact equates their fear of God with their social concern, illustrating again how their spiritual considerations are limited to their concern with êre.

After the brother leaves on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, the sister begins her 'penance' which, in fact, amounts to finding a way to conceal the birth of her child while continuing to live in the greatest of comfort herself (l. 660). Her limited understanding of the implications of the whole situation results in a correspondingly limited solution. She, like the old advisor, feels that preserving the external appearance of honour will solve everything. Although the instructions on the tablet (ll. 752ff.) indicate a consciousness of the concepts of prayer and penance, her stress on the material necessities of life (i.e., the rich cloth and the gold) illustrates the limited implications for her of the two concepts got and êre and how they are fused in her mind. Religion has a place in her thoughts but it is a rigidly defined concept of which she has no depth of understanding. Her father's advice to her brother serves as a good illustration of the existing emphasis on the material aspects of life. After thirteen lines dealing with how his son should conduct himself as befitting his social status, he adds almost as an afterthought:

vor allen dingen minne got,
rihte wol durch sîn gebot.
(ll. 257/8)

The father, just like the 'wise old man' is unable to see the limitations of his outlook on life. The concept of God is restricted to

that of a formula to be used on certain designated occasions, and the father, like all wise men (l. 194), does not allow God any function in his life. On his death-bed, instead of turning to God, he commends his soul to his loyal subjects (ll. 198/99). The sister exhibits a similar attitude when she turns to her brother or to the old advisor for help rather than placing her trust and faith in God.¹

After the brother's death the emphasis on êre seems to recede and her life takes on more religious overtones. Yet, in spite of her efforts to lead a life of penance, she commits incest a second time and very nearly falls victim to despair ("zwîfel"), the only unforgivable sin.

si gedâhte daz sî vûr wâr
 zuo der helle waere geborn
 und got haete verkorn
 ir herzenlîchez riuwen
 daz sî begienc mit triuwen
 umbe ir erren missetât,
 (ll. 2488/94)

Although she is herself unaware of it, there is an explanation of why she has to recommit her sin. We know that after her brother's death she decides to reject all other suitors and turn her attention to God (ll. 870ff.). From the description of the nature of her devotion it is clear, however, that her conception of 'love' is restricted to the chivalric framework.

vor dem [God] zierte sî ir lîp,
 als ein minnendez wîp
 ûf einen biderben man sol
 dem si gerne behagete wol.
 (ll. 875/78)

Here, her devotion to God assumes the characteristics of an orthodox

¹See below pp. 66/7.

courtship within the established order of the society. The narrator comments on the nature of her 'changed' life:

diu wâre riuwe was dâ bî,
 diu aller sünden machet vrî.
 (ll. 897/8)

Once again, however, we must query his words. What, in fact, constitutes her "wâre riuwe" and of what is she repentant? In order to determine the reason for her decision to lead a celibate life we must examine the nature of her distress which preceded the change. First of all she felt guilty about having slept with her brother, secondly she suffered from the aftermath of childbirth, and thirdly she was anxious about the child's fate. There is no indication, however, that any or all of these led to the alteration in her way of life. Her greatest cause for grief, according to the text, occurs a few days after the abandonment of her child.

unmanic tac ende nam
 unz ir boese maere kam
 und der groezist ungemach
 der ir zir lebene ie geschach,
 daz ir bruoder waere tât.
 (ll. 825/29)

The "herzenlichez riuwe" referred to in line 2492, then, amounts to sorrow over the death of her brother. She still cannot see beyond the immediate situation, this time the loss of her brother, and attempts to solve her problem by turning her attentions to God. As her concept of got, however, is just as limited as that of êre,¹ this, too, proves to be an inadequate solution and she commits incest again. Up until this point, still unaware of the full implications

¹See above pp. 50/1.

of the incest with her brother, she has been unable to experience repentance. Only once did she admit complicity (l. 490) and then she considered the crime to be a "missetât" rather than a sin. At first she regarded the devil, the instigator of all evil, as the cause of her misfortune (l. 386); later she blamed her brother (ll. 440; 758). As recognition of guilt is prerequisite to repentance, the ineptitude of the narrator's comment (ll. 897/8) is apparent. Although religion now seems to be the ruling influence in the mother's life, this is negated by her marriage to Gregorius.¹

The discovery that she has committed incest again constitutes the second major crisis in her life. Feeling that God has spurned her "true repentance" she very nearly falls victim to despair.

vervluochet was diu stunde
von unsers herren munde,
dâ ich inne wart geborn.
(ll. 2563/65)

In believing that she has been cursed from birth, not by the devil, but by God, she exhibits faith in His existence. Her attitude for the moment is entirely negative but, as its positive counterpart is inherent in it, it is far less dangerous than her former indifference. More rational thinking finally results in the recognition of her own guilt. For the first time she sees the broader implications of her

¹King, Mediaeval German Studies (London, 1965), p. 90, excuses her breaking her "self-made" vow on the grounds that circumstances forced her to do so. He would not agree that there is any deeper significance involved, that breaking her vow illustrates the inadequacy of her religious convictions. He takes line 2228 as evidence that she married in the name of God.

problem rather than simply the immediate situation.

mich wundert, nâch der missetât
die mir der lîp begangen hât
daz mich diu erde geruochet tragen.
(ll. 2681/84)

The way is now clear for a real understanding of God's function but she is incapable of attaining this plateau by herself. She takes a positive step towards her own salvation by asking advice of Gregorius.¹ He then explains the true nature of repentance and outlines a programme of penance for her. It is interesting to compare his advice (ll. 2707 ff.) with that of the 'wise old man' (ll. 603ff.). Both feel she should remain in control of her lands, but Gregorius, contrary to the old advisor, advocates total abnegation of all material wealth (l. 2713). There is no suggestion of a compromise--religious considerations are no longer restricted by concern with êre (position in society). In accepting Gregorius' advice she assumes, if she does not fully comprehend, his view of religion. Evidence later in the text indicates that she dedicates her life to the fulfilment of these demands and, as a result, is absolved of her sins (l. 3954).

In summing up, the 'got-êre' pattern with regard to Gregorius' mother can be divided into four stages. During her childhood she has a very limited view of êre and therefore of got. When this framework is threatened, she attempts to hold on to both. The inadequacy of this approach is revealed by the second incest which brings about real recognition of her relationship to God. This leads, with the aid of rât from Gregorius, to her penance and her real

¹See below p. 70.

understanding of her êre (her relationship to Gregorius).

2) Gregorius' attitude towards religion and social convention.

The description of Gregorius' childhood furnishes the first pieces of evidence with regard to his basic outlook on life. He is apparently an exceptional child with a terrific capacity and keenness for learning. Whatever his master asks of him is accomplished without complaint or need of further urging. According to our story he is "der jâre ein kint, der witze ein man" (ll. 1180). Until his fifteenth year Gregorius acts more or less like a sponge, soaking up everything he reads or is taught. During this period he learns and accepts, in theory anyway, everything:

swaz ze triuwen und ze êren
und ze vrûmekeit gezôch,
(ll. 1164/65)

Within the monastic framework triuwen, êren and vrûmekeit have an entirely different connotation than when employed in a chivalric context. Although all three words have very broad implications, they are here severely limited by the ecclesiastical environment. Gregorius' behaviour, in his rigid adherence to the monastic code, reflects how well he has absorbed these teachings--a limited conception of got is the motivating force in his life.

er suochte gnâde unde rât
zallen zîten an got
und behielt starke sîn gebot.
(ll. 1260/62)

Everything runs smoothly for fifteen years until a crisis arises which tests the adequacy of this framework. For apparently no reason he strikes his brother and, although he repents immediately (l. 1360),

this proves ineffectual in preserving his former way of life. When he discovers that he is a foundling, the whole structure of his life crumbles around him.

leider ich bin des betrogen,
ich enbin niht der ich wände sîn.
(11. 1402/03)

One might query why his repentance proved inadequate--why he was not forgiven as should have been the case had he truly repented (11. 48/50). Just as in the case of his mother, the nature of his repentance must be examined.

Grêgôrjus, dô er daz kint gesluoc,
dar umbe was er riuwic gnuoc
und lief im hin ze hûse nâch.
dar umbe was im 'alsô gâch
daz er des sêre vorhte
daz im daz kint entworhte
sîner ammen minne.
(11. 1359/65)

Clearly his repentance is not of the kind necessary for the absolution of sin (l. 49). It is more remorse or fear that he might lose the love of his foster mother. His reaction is, however, in complete accordance with his limited understanding of the situation. He too must recognize his own guilt and learn the nature of repentance before he can be absolved of ^{guilt} sin. For these reasons it is necessary for him to recommit his sin.

At this point, an investigation into the exact nature of his 'sin' would be appropriate. The two obtrusively 'wrong' sets of relationships in connection with Gregorius' life must first of all be taken into consideration--the first being the brother-sister incest of which he is the product, and the second being the incest with his mother. Both are of the same kind, i.e., illicit and yet

'innocent' (there is a degree of awareness in both cases) sexual relationships. The parallel with Adam and Eve--i.e., with original sin--is clearly apparent. There is another event in Gregorius' life which must also be considered--the hitting of his brother. This incident, highly reminiscent of Cain and Abel, is also a manifestation of original sin. Both the hitting of his brother, in that it brings him back to his most immediate origins, and the incest with his mother are necessary for him to become aware of his ^{sin} guilt--i.e., the fact that he was born. His ^{'guilt'} 'sin', then, is in being a human being.¹ To be 'absolved' of this state is, in fact, to die or, like Gregorius and his mother, to somehow get beyond the human framework. To attain absolution, in terms of the Church, repentance is necessary. But what is 'repentance' for original sin, for being a human being? Gregorius' 'penance' on the rock began with the recognition of his 'guilt'--i.e., the sinfulness inherent in his human nature--and was characterized by his growing awareness and acceptance of the function of 'sin' in human existence--i.e., to lead man back to his origins. To 'repent' then is to become aware of the human condition as it applies to oneself.

Gregorius' reaction in the face of the first crisis (i.e., the discovery that he is a foundling) reveals the theoretical nature and thus the inadequacy of his former acceptance of got as his guiding principle. When he is alienated from his foster family he turns, not to God for support, but to himself. He still acknowledges a dependence

¹Although King also states Gregorius' 'sin' in these terms (cf. above p. 30), he does not produce the evidence to substantiate his conclusions.

on God, but his confidence in his own ability belies the fact. A closer examination of the values he now adopts reveals a strong similarity with those of the society in Equitânjâ:

ich hân die kunst und ouch den sin,
 ich genise wol, und wil ez got.
 sô sêre vûrhte ich den spot:
 ich wolde ê sîn dâ nieman ist,
 ê daz ich über dise vrist
 belibe hie ze lande.
 jâ vertribet mich diu schande.
 (ll. 1420/26)

His preoccupation with "schande" and "spot" suggests the same limited understanding of êre which governed his mother's actions before the death of her brother.¹ He seems to have forgotten the diametrically opposite implications of the term which constituted part of his education (l. 1164) and of which the abbot in vain tries to remind him.

got hât vil wol zuo dir getân:
 er hât von sînen minnen
 an lîbe und an sinnen
 dir vil vrîe wal gegeben,
 daz dû nû selbe dîn leben
 maht koufen unde kêren
 ze schanden oder zu êren.
 (ll. 1436/42)

Gregorius, however, refuses to listen. It is not so much the fact that he is a foundling of which he is ashamed, but that everyone will find out about it (ll. 1427/31). Just as was his mother, he is concerned about losing the external appearance of honour. He feels that he will be able to lead an honourable life only in a land where no one knows of his origins (ll. 1417/21).

¹See above pp. 49/50. The mother, too, was obsessed with a fear of "schande" (ll. 489; 604) and "spot" (l. 640).

Gregorius speaks sardonically about the "huobe" which he has inherited from his father:

ich trage si alle samet hie,
die huobe die mir mîn vater lie.
(ll. 1695/96)

Although in his opinion he has received nothing from his father, he has clearly inherited some of the family characteristics. Aside from his physical appearance, he has his father's sense of pride which results in his particular emphasis on êre. He also has an intense yearning to lead a chivalric life:

weizgot nû was ie mîn muot,
haete ich geburt und daz guot,
ich wûrde gerne ritter.
(ll. 1501/03)

Although he tries to assure the abbot that he can serve God as a knight (l. 1534), it is apparent from his emphasis on himself as an isolated being, totally responsible for his own fate and happiness that the childlike feeling of kinship with God has dissipated. He exhibits complete confidence in his own ability to gain material wealth and honour (in the sense of social prestige) (ll. 1697/1731).

Gregorius experiences mixed feelings upon reading the tablet, but the sensation of joy on the discovery of his noble birth overrules his sorrow about the sin in which he was born. In spite of his expressed attitude:

ouwê, lieber herre,
ich bin vervallen verre
âne alle mîne schulde.
wie sol ich gotes hulde
gewinnen nâch der missetât
diu hie vor mir geschriben stât?
(ll. 1779/84)

he has no intention of modifying his former decision to become a knight as is shown by his refusal to follow the abbot's advice.

The discovery that he is of noble birth only awakens a strong desire to find out who he is and where he came from (ll. 1799/1805).

Gregorius begins his new career with a preconceived, rather idealistic view of courtly life (ll. 1569/1620). His idea of winning honour (i.e., fame) through battle is completely orthodox and the usual formulas are used to justify his decision to fight the "Rômaere":

durch got und durch êre
wolde er verliesen sînen lîp
oder daz unschuldige wîp
loesen von des herren hant
der ir genomen hâte ir lant.
(ll. 2070/74)

This does not seem to explain adequately his real motivation, which is revealed in his earlier deliberation (ll. 2028ff.). The last few lines are significant:

man klaget mich niht ze vil,
ob ich tôt von im gelige:
ist aber daz ich im an gesige,
sô bin ich êren rîche
iemer êwiclîche.
daz wizze man unde wîp,
mir ist lieber daz mîn lîp
bescheidenlîche ein ende gebe
dan daz ich lasterlîchen lebe.
(ll. 2058/66)

His interest is not so much in aiding the distressed lady as in winning honour in the sense of fame and social position for himself. The basic argument in favour of the battle is that he has nothing to lose and everything to gain. He sees this entirely in terms of knight-errantry, and is unaware of the deeper and more ominous significance of his words. The opposition between 'bescheidenliche ein ende geben' and 'lasterlîchen leben' relates as well to the real choice before him, the real meaning behind the battle, his penance and his eventual function

in society. In Gregorius' case, knight-errantry for once acquires the seriousness it is elsewhere casually assumed to possess, and ironically, the knight-errant himself does not know it. Indeed, he goes out of his way to interpret his actions on one level, in keeping with his present limited understanding of chivalry.

The details of the battle are also significant.¹ First of all Gregorius tricks the "Rômaere" into entering his own territory (ll. 2103/07) and then, after a short battle, he grabs his opponent's horse by the bridle and hauls him into the confines of the city.

Dô ir ietweder genuoc
mit dem swerte gesluoc,
dô bekumberte in alsus
der getühtige Grêgôrjus
daz er in zoumen began
und vuorte in mit gewalte dan
vaste gegen dem bûrgetor.
.....
doch behabete Grêgôrjus hie
sînen gevangen man
und brâhte in ritterlîchen dan.
zuo sluogen sî daz bûrgetor.
(ll. 2139/61)

The discrepancy between the actual situation and the usual image invoked by the words "getühtige" and "ritterlîchen" produces an ironic effect which accentuates the serious limitations of the chivalric concept of êre.

Following the conquest, Gregorius marries the lady and attempts to live within the chivalric framework. His concept of got is now elucidated and, by means of irony, the inherent limitations in it,

¹Thomas Mann alone seems aware of the discrepancy between this and the orthodox battle. His exaggerated description in Der Erwählte (Frankfurt/Main, 1951), pp. 175/79, assumes the character of a farce.

too, are revealed.

enhaete erz niht durch got verlân,
im mûesen wesen undertân
swaz im der lande was gelegen.
nû wolde er aber der mâze phlegen:
durch die gotes êre
sô engerte er nihtes mêre
wan daz im dienen solde:
vûrbaz er niene wolde.

(11. 2269/76)

As a kind of favour to God he refrains from conquering all the neighbouring lands. The resulting incestuous relationship reveals the inadequacy of his limited view of both êre and got.

The second crisis in Gregorius' life, the discovery that he has married his mother, brings about a change in his attitude towards got and êre. His first reaction is to complain about the way in which God granted him his wish.

diz ist des ich ie bat,
daz got mich braehte ûf die stât
daz mir sô wol geschaehe
daz ich mit vreuden saehe
mîne liebe muoter.
rîcher got vil guoter,
des hâst dû anders mich gewert
danne ich an dich hân gegert.

(11. 2609/16)

Although his outburst approaches despair, he recognizes his own responsibility for his predicament and does not blame God. Indeed this crisis serves to reinstate God in the position of importance He formerly occupied in Gregorius' life (i.e., before he hit his brother). His earlier education and new-found faith¹ now enable him to assure

¹See below p. 83.

his mother of God's mercy.

jâ hân ich einen trôst gelesen
daz got die wâren riuwe hât
ze buoze über alle missetât.
(11. 2700/02)

As he recognizes his own guilt, true repentance is now possible, and the advice he gives his mother (11. 2707/35) shows that he is aware of what penance entails. He is now able to make the proper kind of distinctions. In line 2713 he qualifies êre with the adjective "werltlich", indicating his awareness of the limitations of êre in the courtly sense and at the same time extending the meaning of the unqualified noun to include the opposite pole 'spiritual' as well. He now realizes the necessity of subjugating himself totally to God's will.

dem lande und dem guote
und werltlichem muote
dem sî hiute widerseit.
(11. 2745/47)

With these words he removes his rich clothes and departs in the rags of a penitent--i.e., he gets rid of his limited view of got and êre.¹

During his long period of penance on the rock, Gregorius learns true humility (11. 3501ff.). Only after he has received a sign of God's forgiveness will he return with the two ambassadors to Rome. He has arrived back at his starting point but on a much higher plane. He is now aware of the full implications of the word êre. In speaking to the two delegates from Rome he declares:

ich hân umbe unsern herren got
verdienet leider verre baz
sînen zornlîchen haz
danne daz er an mich kêre
die gnâde und die êre
die ein bâbest haben sol.
(11. 3542/47)

¹See below p. 83.

Here, êre is seen in specific relation to a particular office, that of pope. It is the concept he had heard about as a child (l. 1164) even though the abbot himself was unaware of its range of meaning, but through lack of experience had failed to understand. Through experience he has also come to understand God's function in his life. He is aware that all his powers are from God and he has consciously subjugated himself to His will.

ez kam von sînem gebote
 daz ich her wart erwelt:
 alsus hân ich im geselt
 beidiu sêle unde lîp.
 (11. 3932/35)

The 'got-êre pattern with regard to Gregorius, then, begins with a naive acceptance of God as the ruling force in his life. As a result of the first crisis, the discovery he is an orphan, he rejects his former framework and considerations for êre (in the restricted sense of social position) take precedence over his earlier limited religious concerns. The second crisis, the discovery of the incest with his mother, brings about a return on a higher plane to his former outlook on life. The difference is that it is no longer theoretical--i.e., mere acceptance of got and êre within a limited framework--but through experience he has come to a broader understanding of the full implications and these concepts and his own relationship to them.

B. Investigation of the use of the word 'rât'

1. Abstraction of the 'rât' (advice) pattern

a) Gregorius' mother's attitude towards and dependence on advice.

As a child, Gregorius' mother led a completely dependent life. On his death-bed her father, realizing he had not made the proper provisions for her,¹ expresses concern about her future (l. 241). In an attempt to rectify the situation he leaves her in her brother's care. The young boy tries to take his father's place and provide her with everything she needs (ll. 277ff.).² The drawback of her completely dependent position is revealed by the fact that, when the necessity arises, she is incapable of making a decision herself (l. 391). When she discovers her impending state of motherhood she expects her brother to find a solution to the problem, just as he has always done in the past. She has an idea of what kind of advice she wants:

und vinden uns etelîchen rẫt,
ob wir durch unser missetât
âne gotes hulde mûezen sîn,
daz doch unser kindelîn
mit uns iht verloren sî,
daz der valle iht werden drî.
(ll. 469/474)

but readily accepts her brother's solution which in no way takes the child's welfare into consideration.³ The advice offered by the 'wise old man' is regarded by both brother and sister as a means of

¹See below p. 84.

²See below p. 85.

³See above pp. 48/9.

preserving their honour (ll. 528/33) and, although it is ambiguous nonsense,¹ they accept it without question.

der rât dûhte si beide guot
und volgeten alsô drâte
sînem guoten râte.

(ll. 624/26)

The direct consequences of following this 'good advice' are revealed in the brother's death (l. 829) and her further involvement in sin (i.e., the incest with her son).

When the child is born the mother is again faced with having to make a decision, and again she fails to face her responsibility. Instead she awaits a solution from Providence.

an got sazten si den rât,
daz er si aller untât
bewarte an disen dingen.

(ll. 693/95)

Her patience is rewarded by a sudden inspiration. The reaction to this 'inspiration' is, of course, conditioned by her predicament and her limited understanding of her own needs. It is significant that she did not pray to God for help in this instance but rather awaited enlightenment. This would seem to account for the close relationship between the solution and her own immediate needs. Her only concern at the moment is in concealing the child's birth and thus maintaining her honour.² Abandoning the child fulfills the immediate function of saving her reputation.

Although Gregorius' mother is completely dependent on others to make decisions for her and, due to her limited understanding of

¹See above pp. 49/50.

²See above pp. 47/51.

the situation, is not even aware of what kind of advice she needs herself, she does not hesitate to give advice to others. The advice she gives Gregorius (cf. the tablet) is compiled without any thought as to his future situation and as a result is of a very vague, general nature. The inherent contradictions--she wants him to devote his life to God yet outfits him for a secular existence--illustrate the limitations of her categories. Because advice, to be relevant, must apply to a specific situation, it is impossible for her, because of her limited view of the whole situation, to formulate an adequate solution.

The death of her brother leaves Gregorius' mother in an extremely vulnerable position¹ which her new consort, God (l. 885), is unable to defend.² Although leading a celibate life was her own decision, the fact that she marries Gregorius demonstrates the inadequacy of this solution. The way in which she breaks her vow reflects her inability to be open with herself--i.e., her limited understanding of her own motivations. Although she wants to marry Gregorius, as is evinced by her favourable attitude towards him, she is unable to take the responsibility of any such action on herself and waits until she has a scapegoat, this time her subjects, to bear the burden of her decision. These evasion tactics are employed again later when, in order to find out what is bothering Gregorius, she turns to the maid for advice (l. 2425). She realizes that asking Gregorius what is wrong might result in losing him (l. 2430) and

¹See below p. 87.

²Her limited conception of God is discussed above pp. 51/3.

she is unable to accept the weight of this burden herself. By asking the maid for advice she shifts the responsibility for the consequences to her shoulders and, at the same time, accomplishes her purpose. The fact that she follows the maid's advice without any hesitation (l. 2473 "alsô drâte), just as she had obeyed the 'wise old man' (l. 625), points to the correspondence between their suggestions and her own desires.

Up until now Gregorius' mother, in her constant search for advice which would fulfill her immediate needs and allow her to carry out her own desires, has displayed a unique ability to avoid accepting the responsibility for the consequences of her actions. She relies totally on the advice of others to relieve her of this burden. Her failure to assume responsibility and make independent decisions was the cause of the first incest and leads directly to the second. The discovery that she has married her son comes as a shattering blow to the façade of immunity she has created. As usual she tries desperately to shift the blame--first of all to God (ll. 2563f.), then to the devil (l. 2602) and finally to the imperfection of man in terms of the orthodox concept of a split existing between body and soul.¹ All prove inadequate and, reduced to the conclusion that she is being punished by God (ll. 2678ff.), at last she is forced to see beyond the limited scope of her immediate situation and is able

¹In attempting to explain the extent of her loss in terms of the orthodox concept of the split between the body and the soul, she, in fact, denies the existence of the dichotomy which is based on the incompatibility of the two. Stating that she has lost both implies that they are parts of one thing and that both can be retained.

to recognize her own guilt (ll. 2681ff.). At this point she takes a positive step towards her own salvation by asking her son for advice:

sun herre, muget ir mir sagen
 (wan ir hábet der buoche vil gelesen):
 möhte aber dehein buoze wesen
 über sus gewante missetât,
 (ll. 2684/87)

Although still unable to act independently, she is now conscious of her situation. Having accepted her guilt, she is now aware of what kind of advice she needs and acts on the basis of her new understanding.

Gregorius' mother's attitude towards advice changes during the course of the story. During her childhood, of course, she has no need of advice as she is never in a position where she has to make a decision. Her father and later her brother look after all her needs. The inadequacy of this approach to life is revealed when she is placed in a situation where she must make a decision and is unable to do so. The first time she feels the need of advice is when she discovers that she is pregnant. Although she is aware that she needs spiritual help for her child, her limited understanding of the situation allows her to accept the advice of her brother and the 'wise old man' instead. Seeking advice has become synonymous with achieving one's own end. After the death of her brother she continues to seek advice which will allow her to carry out her own wishes and at the same time relieve her of the responsibility for the consequences of her actions. The discovery of the second incest brings about her realization that she needs advice, not to shirk responsibility and carry out her own wishes, but to help her achieve

spiritual salvation. She now knows what she needs (she asks specifically for a way of doing penance) and to whom to turn. Her dependence persists but it is now accepted and understood.¹

b) Gregorius' attitude towards and dependence on advice.

As a young child Gregorius simply accepts the advice and teachings of his elders without question.

wie gerne ez âne slege mit bete
sînes meisters willen tete!
(ll. 1167/68)

As a result of his upbringing and his eagerness and ability to learn, he fits easily into the pattern chosen for him by the abbot. This is reflected in his devoutness and naive trust in God.

er suochte gnâde unde rât
zallen ziten an got
und behielt starke sîn gebot.
(ll. 1260/62)

In other words he simply accepts what he understands to be God's counsel. This attitude proves to be an inadequate approach to life. Although he nears perfection in every respect (appearance, intelligence, temperament), for some unknown reason he suddenly strikes the fisherman's child. As a result, his whole former way of life disintegrates and with it his naive dependence on God's rât. The discovery that he is an orphan results in a feeling of total isolation and aloneness. Although his first reaction is to run to the abbot and tell him what has happened, he neither asks advice of him nor of God. In spite of his attitude the abbot tries to give him some advice (l. 1433) which Gregorius, feeling the freedom of his

¹See below pp. 89/90.

new independent position, is unable to accept.

nû ist mir mîn tumpheit
alsô sêre erbolgen,
si enlât mich iu niht volgen.
(ll. 1484/86)

As the argument progresses, Gregorius becomes more and more confident in his ability to direct his own life and make his own decisions, until he no longer feels the need of any counsel whatsoever:

herre, ich bin ein junger man .
und lerne des ich niht enkan.
swar ich die sinne wenden wil,
des gelerne ich schiere vil.
(ll. 1543/46)

The abbot tries everything to convince him to stay at the monastery. It is evident that his advice is not based entirely on religious considerations when he resorts to offers of material wealth and easy living (ll. 1660ff.). He finally shows him the tablet, hoping the knowledge of his sinful origins will influence him to stay. Although his confidence is somewhat shaken and he is moved to ask the abbot's advice (l. 1782), his uncertainty lasts only for a brief moment and he refuses to take his spiritual father's counsel (ll. 1799/1805).

After leaving the monastery Gregorius' attitude towards rât remains for a time basically unchanged (i.e., his confidence in his prowess as a knight (l. 2054) and later in his ability to set his own limitations (l. 2272) excludes any dependence on advice from any source). The fact that this solution results in incest demonstrates its inadequacy. It is not until after the discovery that he has married his mother that any change in his attitude occurs. His first reaction is to complain about the way in which God answered his

prayers and reunited him with his mother (ll. 2614ff.). He is able to see beyond his immediate predicament, however, and realizes that it was his own wish to find his mother and does not blame God for his misfortune. Although there is no one for him to turn to, indeed he is in the position of advisor with regard to his mother, he is able to place himself in God's hands and to convince his mother to do likewise. He is able to assure her that through true repentance and proper penance they can still achieve God's forgiveness. The only explanation for this abrupt change in attitude from complete independence to dependence on God is that he remembers the religious teachings of his childhood and now has faith in them.

jâ hân ich einen trôst gelesen
 daz got die wâren riuwe hât
 ze buoze Über alle missetât.
 iuwer sêle ist nie sô ungesund,
 wirt iu daz ouge ze einer stunt
 von herzelîcher riuwe naz,
 ir sît genesen, geloubet daz.
 (ll. 2700/06)

In the words of the 'prologue' it would seem that Gregorius has received the gift of clothing ("gedingen" and "vorhte") from God.¹ Although there is no human being to give him guidance, he knows, seemingly by intuition, what he must do.

ich wil im ouch zu buoze stân

 dem lande und dem guote
 und werltlîchem muote
 dem sî hiute widerseit.
 (ll. 2736/47)

Gregorius now realizes that he is not an isolated being, but that he needs the help of others. He makes the initial decision

¹See below p. 83.

himself (i.e., to do penance) but, in order to find a suitable place to carry it out, he needs the co-operation of the fisherman.

sît daz mich hiute
mîn wec zuo iu getragen hât,
sô suoche ich gnâde unde rât.
(11. 2968/70)

After seventeen years penance on the rock Gregorius is located by two delegates from Rome, who have come to take him back with them as pope. Gregorius, in demanding concrete evidence that he has been forgiven, illustrates the extent of his dependence on God. He no longer entertains any presumptuous ideas that he is capable of setting his own limits or doing without advice. The fact that he realizes consciously his dependence on God (l. 3931) enables him to become the "rihtaere" (l. 3759) of Christendom. Because of the extent of his experiences and the powers bestowed upon him by God, he has become a person qualified to give spiritual advice (l. 3875):

sus kunde er rehte mâze geben
ûber geistlichez leben,
dâ mite der sûndaere genas
und der guote staete was.
(11. 3823/26)

Gregorius' dependence on rât, then, begins with the indiscriminate acceptance of everything he is taught, progresses through a period of categorical refusal to accept any advice and finishes with his recognition of the intermediate point between these two opposing poles. He recognizes the need to make his own decisions and also the necessity of accepting assistance from others. When he has at last attained this balance, he is in a position to give advice (rât) to others.

2. 'rât' used to denote provisions for life

Besides having the connotation 'advice', the word rât, which occurs with great frequency in this poem, is also used to connote those things which are considered necessary requirements for life. An examination of the text with this in mind reveals two different opinions as to what constitutes the necessities of life.

According to the abbot, the only course open to Gregorius in the light of his past life is to remain in the monastery:

dêswâr, dâz geloube mir,
gestâst dû bî der ritterschaft,
sich, sô mêret sich diu kraft
dîner tegelîchen missetât
und enwîrt dîn niemer rât
dâ von sô lâ diu irrecheit
die dû an dich hâst geleit
unde diene gote hie.

(ll. 1786/93)

In his opinion, a life as a knight will never provide Gregorius with what he needs to obtain God's grace. As he is willing, however, to compromise and permit Gregorius to lead a secular life within the monastery (ll. 1659ff.), it is evident that he regards the mere fact of living within the monastic framework as sufficient to assure him of salvation. The limitations of this superficial belief are illustrated by the very fact that Gregorius breaks out when he hits his brother.¹ Life in the monastery is not an adequate provision for Gregorius' life and he escapes with the intention of becoming a knight.

Within the structure of the courtly society rât has a somewhat different emphasis. The only necessary provisions for life are

¹See above pp. 56; 71.

considered to be food, wealth and rich clothing. Gregorius, in becoming a knight, attempts to live within this framework:

Ein schef wart im gereite,
dâ man im an leite
ze dem lîbe volleclicîchen rât:
spîse, sîn golt, sîne wât.
(ll. 1809/12)

The juxtaposition of these three necessities is significant, in that Gregorius dispenses with all three when he leaves courtly life behind and undertakes his penance.¹ This seems to be the only function of spîse in the work. golt and wât, on the other hand, are closely related to the patterns already analysed, in that their importance to Gregorius and his mother changes with the development of their attitudes to êre and rât. Clothing is also directly connected with the pattern of family relationships.²

Even in the monastery Gregorius is recognizably suitable for the wealth and power of a secular courtly life:

ez waere harte schedelîch
daz man in niht mûhte
geprîsen von geslâhte
und jâhen des ze staete
ob erz an gebûrte haete,
so waere wol ein rîche lant
ze sîner vrûmecheit bewant.
(ll. 1278/84)

Although he is unaware of the full implication of his words, Gregorius himself speaks of his inheritance:

ich trage si alle samet hie,
die huobe die mir mîn vater lie.
(ll. 1695/96)

Moreover, there are more concrete manifestations of the chivalric

¹See below pp. 80/2.

²See below p. 88.

code of values which also constitute part of his heritage. The articles his mother provided him with when she abandoned him, rich silken material, gold and the tablet, all have a strong influence on his future life. The money was intended to ensure his education (l. 742) but her instructions for the finder to increase the wealth for the child (l. 745) communicate her materialistic orientation. The rich silken material, too, is inconsistent with her expressed desire for the child to lead a religious life. Both the fortune and the cloth pertain to secular rather than clerical life. The tablet itself which was not supposed to link him with any particular land:

im wart dâ niht benant
weder liute noch lant,
geburt noch sîn heimuot:
daz was ouch in ze helne guot.

(ll. 763/66)

had, because of the very nature of its inscription, the opposite effect. Reading the tablet assures Gregorius of his noble birth and makes him more determined than ever to become a knight and also to find out who he is and where he came from--the very thing his mother ostensibly wanted to conceal:

ouwê, lieber herre,
jâ ist mîn gir noch merre
zuo der werlde dan ê.
ichn geruowe niemer mê
und wil iemer varnde sîn
mir entuo noch gotes gnâde schîn
von wanne ich sî oder wer.

(ll. 1799/1805)

Those things which the mother considered absolutely necessary for the child's welfare--gold, rich clothing and the knowledge of his noble birth--assure his becoming a knight and his return to Equitânjâ.

Clothing also plays a significant role in the religious environment of the monastery. The abbot, for example, regards

Gregorius' physical perfection as concrete evidence that he was cut out to be a cleric and argues that a monk's habit would suit him better than anything else:

dû bist vil wol geschaffen
ze einem gotes kinde
und ze kôrgesinde:
diu kutte gestuont nie manne baz.
(ll. 1554/57)

Gregorius is quick to see the irrelevance of such an argument and suggests that the abbot should let him try on knight's attire; that it would suit him just as well (ll. 1558/62). In spite of the fact that the abbot had always dressed Gregorius in clerical raiment, he was unable to shape him according to his own pattern. Clothing alone is seen here as an inadequate means of determining his way of life. In attempting to persuade Gregorius to stay at the monastery the abbot discloses the real reason for his failure:

sun, ich hete dich erwelt
ze einem gotes kinde:
(ll. 1526/27)

It is not the fact that the clothing did not suit him, but that the life had been chosen for him and he had no inner desire to become a monk. As an individual,¹ Gregorius feels he must make his own decisions. He wishes to become a knight and has all the necessary attributes. The act of dressing himself in the suit of clothes made from the material he had been given by his mother symbolizes his rejection of the monastic for the courtly life (l. 1649). With this

¹It is significant that Gregorius alone among the characters has a name which is tantamount to saying that he has a separate identity and responsibility as an individual.

attire he also assumes the chivalric code of values (i.e., the stress on the material necessities of life). He leaves the monastery with all the provisions he feels he needs for life--food, gold and his knightly apparel (ll. 1809/12).

Upon arriving at Equitânjâ Gregorius, because of his appearance and obvious wealth, is welcomed with open arms:

nû sâhen si daz er waere
vil harte lobebaere
an lîbe und an guote:
mit willigem muote
wart er geherberget dô.
(ll. 1877/81)

Everywhere he goes his reputation precedes him and, due to his known generosity, he is well received. Wealth and noble appearance are adequate signs of good will within the context of this society. Although Gregorius has from the first the intention of defending the besieged city, it is not until after he has heard of the duchess' youth, beauty and eligibility plus the fact that she has renounced all men that he expresses any desire to meet her (ll. 1895/1903). She is not unreceptive to the idea of greeting him even though she seldom grants a stranger an audience. She has apparently heard well of him:

ouch was ir von im geseit
diu zuht und diu vrûmecheit
daz ouch sî in vil gerne sach,
daz selten gaste dâ geschach.
(ll. 1907/10)

Once again it is his favourable reputation which clears the way for him. zuht and vrûmecheit here can refer only to external signs of nobility--his generosity and proud bearing--because, until this point, he has done nothing other than pay well for everything (l. 1890) and talk about his good intentions (ll. 1868ff.).

The meeting with the young duchess could be termed quite successful in that both experience a mutual feeling of attraction for one another. She recognizes the material of his clothing, is reminded of the earlier relationship with her brother and as a result is strongly attracted to Gregorius. It is his clothing, then, which gives him an advantage over other men in winning her affection:

nû sach si in vlîzeclîchen an
und mê dan sî deheinen man
vordes ie getaete:
daz kam von sîner waete.
(ll. 1939/42)

The very articles she provided him with as a child, the tablet which guided him back to her, and the clothing which made him acceptable to her as a suitor (i.e., put him in the position of his father),¹ can be seen as basic factors leading up to the second incest. The tablet has the added function of exposing the relationship as well as helping to bring it about. The final result is that Gregorius, having discovered the limitations of knighthood, realizes he must break out of this framework. He now adopts a new attitude towards the necessities of life:

dem lande und dem guote
und werltlîchem muote
dem sî hiute widerseit.
(ll. 2745/47)

It is significant that, at this point, Gregorius exchanges his elegant knight's apparel for the modest attire of a penitent, thus breaking the strong bond with the courtly society and his mother.²

¹See below p. 89.

²See below p. 89.

It is also interesting to note that when he sets off with the fisherman he forgets the tablet:

daz er der tavele vergaz
 die er zallen zîten
 truoc bî sîner sîten.
 die îsenhalten truoc er dan
 unde gâhte nâch dem man.
 (ll. 3080/84)

The function of the tablet, which seems to have been to guide Gregorius back to his origins and to reveal his sin to him, is now fulfilled. Aware of his origins and his own guilt, Gregorius no longer has any need of the tablet.¹ It is replaced by iron chains with which he will shackle himself to the rock to await God's judgement.

After seventeen years the pope in Rome dies and two delegates, on inspiration from God, set off to find Gregorius. The description of the condition in which they found him is significant. First he is described as he had been at the apex of his glory--in every respect the picture of an ideal knight (ll. 3379/98). This is followed by a description of how they actually found him. Instead of his haughty bearing and rich clothing he was naked and ashamed. His former long flowing hair and well-kept beard were now filthy, matted and rough. His rosy complexion had become dark and patchy. His cheeks were hollow, his eyes dull and sunken and the flesh on his bones had wasted away to nothing (ll. 3403ff.). Although he was in every respect

¹On another level the tablet represents a code by which to live. Now that Gregorius is withdrawing from life (i.e., subjugating himself totally to God), he no longer needs this code. Instead, it is replaced by the chains of bondage. When he is recalled to society, he finds the tablet again and is able to take it with him. There is every indication that it would raise no further problems.

repugnant to society, he was at last acceptable to God:

sus vunden sîe den gotes trût,
einen dürftigen ûf der erde,
ze gote in hôhem werde,
den liuten widerzaeme,
ze himele vil genaeme.

(ll. 3418/22)

The standards set up by the chivalric society based on appearance and material wealth are shown here to be inadequate considerations for life.

The significance of the 'parable' in the prologue now becomes clear. It is apparent from the beginning that it cannot be related exclusively to the biblical parable of the Good Samaritan.¹ Of what, for instance, would the victim of the thieves have had to repent (l. 126)? Neither can the fact that the victim became "eine über al die kristenheit" (l. 143) be related to the biblical story. Although we are told that it is necessary to hear what this man's wounds were, how he received them and how he managed to escape eternal damnation (ll. 144ff.), it is not until the end of the poem that we become aware of the answers to these questions. All these elements support the hypothesis of the interrelationship between the prologue and the main body of the poem.² The parable in the prologue is about a man who had fallen into the hands of the "mordaere" (i.e., the evils of the world), whose "sinne" had been robbed of their clothing (ll. 100/05), and who, in spite of everything, managed to escape.

¹Any attempt to relate this 'parable' exclusively to the parable of the Good Samaritan or other biblical analogies (see above pp. 31ff.) is to deny its function within the work.

²King too, was aware of a close relationship between the parable in the prologue and the events of Gregorius' life (cf. above pp. 33/4).

Gregorius, too, had fallen victim to the 'evils of the world' which had robbed his senses of their clothing. This can be interpreted in two ways. In the very literal sense, the loss of the clothing can be regarded as the loss of both his monk's habit and of his knightly apparel, essential steps in his 'salvation'. In a more figurative sense, the loss of the clothing can be interpreted as the discarding of his deficient attitudes towards got, êre and rât. In either case the "mordaere" have a definite and positive function in his life. He manages to escape these evils just in time (ll. 98f.)--i.e., he recognizes and admits his guilt with the result that he is not denied God's mercy:

dô enhâte im got niht verzigen
 sîner gewonlîcher erbarmekheit
 und sande im disiu zwei kleit:
 gedingen unde vorhte,
 diu got selbe worhte
 daz si im ein schirm waeren
 und allen sûndaeren:
 (ll. 110/116)

The only necessities of life, then, are the tablet which makes Gregorius aware of his guilt and the two pieces of clothing provided by God ("gedingen" and "vorhte") which make his true repentance and penance possible. Just as the rich silken material led Gregorius back to courtly life and his mother, possession of the clothing, "hope" and "fear", as is illustrated by his new faith in the knowledge he had accumulated as a child (l. 2700),¹ lead him back beyond his earthly origins to God.

¹See above pp. 63/4; 73.

C. Examination of the pattern of family relationships

The pattern of family relationships which emerges from this poem, although the most obtrusive, has been the least discussed. Here a psychological interpretation based on Freud and the Oedipus complex would be possible. Such an approach, however, although modern, would be just as extraneous and limited as the biographical, religious and socio-historical orientated interpretations discussed in the first section of this thesis, and the important integrating function of this pattern would pass totally unnoticed if regarded in such a narrow framework.

As incest, which implies a wrong kind of relationship between two family members, constitutes one of the basic structural elements of this poem we must examine the family situation in more detail and attempt to determine the cause of these misdirected associations. First of all there was a serious deficiency in the relationship between the duke and his two children. His view of the family as a static group composed of parents and children (ll. 214/18) made no provision for the children to grow up and establish families of their own. He realizes too late that he has failed to make the proper provision for his daughter:

jâ vûrhte ich harte sêre
 dîner schoenen swester.
 des ist mîn jâmer vester
 und beginnez nû ze spâte klagen
 daz ich bî allen mînen tagen
 ir dinc niht baz geschaffet hân:
 daz ist unväterlich getân.
 (ll. 236/41)

He does not seem to be aware of what kind of provisions he should have made, his only concern being that the three of them cannot continue

as before, that his death will destroy the family unit. In an attempt to continue to provide for his daughter, he places her in her brother's care. In a sense he is trying to maintain the static family relationship even beyond his death. On the one hand, he expects his son to take over the duties he, as a father, should have executed, on the other hand, he expects him to act in a brotherly way towards her.

ich bevilhe dir die sêle mîn
und diz kint, die swester dîn,
daz dû dich wol an ir bewarst
und ir bruoderlîchen mite varst:
(ll. 259/62)

After the father's death the brother looks after his sister to the best of his ability (l. 277). He attempts to take over the duties of both father and mother (ll. 282ff.) and at the same time remain her brother. He is rewarded for his threefold responsibility by her intense love, which under normal circumstances would have been divided among three people (ll. 300f.). The intensity of feeling between them finally results in the incestuous relationship. In the words of the text:

dâ was der triuwen alze vil.
(l. 396)

In one sense, this can mean simply that they got too involved with each other in a sensual way. On the other hand, triuwe also connotes natural loyalties and obligations among family members so that the line could be paraphrased: 'too many loyalties were concentrated in that one relationship'. In this sense the incest can be seen as a direct result of the burden of responsibility, which the father placed on his son's shoulders, to maintain the family unit. After

the father's death, the two children try to carry on as before. They attempt to maintain all the family relationships in a situation in which there are no longer any parents. This obsession with the family ties makes it impossible for them to grow up and establish independent lives for themselves. Instead, they turn to each other and in a sense replace their parents by establishing themselves in a similar position. The inadequacy of the relationship, however, is apparent in that it represents neither the beginning of new family groups nor a return to the old unit.

The confused brother-sister, father-daughter, mother-daughter, husband-wife relationship results in the conception of a child. This brings home to them the unacceptable nature of their association. In desperation they turn to the 'wise old man', whom their father had recommended, for assistance. Although he gives them some advice, it is evident that he cannot take their father's place (11. 536/38) nor bring about a return to their simple childhood brother-sister relationship. The final outcome is that the brother goes off to his death in the Holy Land, the sister, now totally isolated, remains at home and the child is abandoned to its fate on the sea.

In this inadequate solution to their problem the seeds of the second incest are already sown. The obsession to maintain the old family unit is still strong. The girl, unable to give up the child completely, attempts, by means of the tablet, gold and rich material, to tie it to the family unit. The tablet finally brings him back,

and the elaborate clothing and wealth make him an acceptable suitor in her eyes.¹ The mother, who, in the relationship with her brother, had been in the position of a sister, daughter, wife and mother at one time, is now deprived of all relationships and is left in an extremely vulnerable position. Although she turns to God in an attempt to fill the gap, the relationship, because of its restricted scope, proves to be inadequate.² The image of her devastated lands and main city besieged by the powerful knight (ll. 910ff.) is significant. She is like this last stronghold, stripped of all its protective surroundings, ripe for conquest (cf. the ease with which Gregorius enters into both the city and her affections).

It has already been stated that the tablet guided Gregorius back to his mother. To explain this in more detail we must examine the situation at the monastery. Until he is fifteen years of age, Gregorius leads a contented life in these surroundings. He feels his family background to be perfectly secure and has a very close, if somewhat superficially spiritual relationship with the abbot (he tries to take the place of Gregorius' real father, cf. the number of times he addresses Gregorius as sun). When Gregorius discovers that he is not the fisherman's son, however, his whole former way of life breaks down. Not even this relationship with the abbot can make up for his lack of real family connections. He suddenly feels the need to find a place for himself (ll. 1417/19). After reading the tablet

¹See above p. 80.

²See above pp. 52/3.

and discovering that he is of noble birth, he vows never to rest until he discovers who he is and where he came from (ll. 1802/05). Basically, his return to the world, then, is an attempt to find out where he belongs.

Unknown to him he is guided back to his mother's lands. He could not have arrived at a more opportune moment and is welcomed into the besieged city with open arms. Even the duchess expresses a desire to meet him. To all outward appearances the ensuing relationship develops in a perfectly orthodox and acceptable manner:

nû behagete im diu vrouwe wol
 als einem manne ein wîp sol
 an der nihtes gebrast:
 auch behagete ir der gast
 baz danne ie man getaete.
 (ll. 1955/59)

There are, however, several indications of the shortcomings of this relationship. First of all, although she recognizes the material from which his clothing is made (ll. 1945ff.), she does not say anything. This seems to be a part of her background she would like to keep hidden. Gregorius, too, has his secrets--he keeps the tablet hidden in his room. The third factor which belies the openness and frankness of the relationship is the unorthodox nature of the battle he ostensibly fights for her.¹ The discovery of the tablet reveals the serious limitations of the seemingly mature, happy relationship.

¹See above pp. 61/2.

<sît ir der man
 (dâ enhelt mich niht an)
 von dem hie an geschriben stât?¹
 sô hât uns des tiuvels rât
 versenket sêle unde lîp:
 ich bin iuwer muoter und iuwer wîp.)
 (11. 2599/2604)

Neither Gregorius nor his mother has succeeded in finding their proper place within a family unit. In a sense they are both still caught up in the static framework established by Gregorius' grandfather. The situation is essentially a return to the one which existed after the first incest, Gregorius now being in his father's place. In forgetting his vow to find his origins, he neglected an important step in the process of growing up. Before he can establish himself at the head of a family he must break the ties with his mother--i.e., go through a process akin to that of birth. Both his first and second 'births' were inadequate in this respect (cf. the tablet and the clothing). Until he does sever this connection he is unable to get beyond it. The tablet, in revealing the bond with his mother, makes it possible for him at last to break out of the restricted family unit. He changes his clothes, symbolizing the final break with his mother, and sets off on his own to do penance. The seventeen years on the rock are necessary before Gregorius is mature enough in God's eyes to accept the responsibility of a family.

¹There seems to be no valid reason for changing this conditional sentence to a question and answer in spite of Neumann's argument to the contrary: "Gregorius lässt wortlos erkennen, dass er es ist, von dem die Tafel berichtet. Daher kann die Fürstin das Tatsächliche in einem unvermittelten Satz festlegen." See Neumann, ed. 1958, p. 157. The question mark, one of Lachmann's additions, is not indicated in the manuscript.

Finding the key which releases him from his chains is the symbolic representation of his full maturation and, as pope, he takes on the responsibilities of a father to all of Christendom.

It is interesting to examine the relationships which exist at the end of the poem. Gregorius, in his position as pope, is in a sense the father to all Christendom. His mother is now in the position of his daughter. On the other hand he still remains a child of his father--now seen in the wider sense as God. In terms of this relationship, his mother is in the position of his sister. They are "zwei ûz erweltiu gotes kint" (l. 3954). A close parallel can be seen between the relationships which exist now and those which existed at the beginning of the poem. Both are essentially family units composed of a father and his two children in which there is a direct connection between father and son but a more oblique connection with the daughter. In both cases she is able to reach her father only through her brother. In the latter case, however, since her brother is in a sense her father as well, she, too, has an adequate family relationship.

Conclusion

To say that Gregorius is a poem illustrating the magnitude of God's mercy, although true, is at best a trivial comment. Such a statement, however, assumes far deeper significance when a close analysis reveals how the various elements all contribute to the attainment of this state of grace. The interesting thing is not to state the theological premise that God has mercy on all sinners, but rather, by examining the process by which Gregorius finally attains absolution, to arrive at the particular manifestation of God's mercy within the context of the poem.

There is nothing unusual or miraculous or unexplainable in Gregorius becoming pope. It is the story of a man, who through true repentance and penance finally achieves God's grace. The exceptional difficulties he had to surmount in order to learn what 'true repentance' entailed for him, and the penance to which he voluntarily subjected himself are rewarded in degree by his elevation to the office of pope. Gregorius is, in a sense, an exceptional example of what man is. Although not all men commit incest or become pope, all men are guilty of 'sin' and all can achieve 'salvation'--if we wish to use these terms. The epilogue extends the scope of the poem to this plane. It is not simply a story about Gregorius' 'sin', but about the 'sin' of man.

des sendet alle gelîche
 disen guoten sūndaere
 ze boten um unser swaere,
 dass wir in disem ellende
 ein alsô genislich ende
 nemen als sî dâ nâmen!

(11. 4000/05)

If we reflect on Gregorius' sin and the sin of mankind, we come to the conclusion that it is in growing up, in being a human being and in living from day to day. As children both Gregorius and his mother are portrayed in a state of innocence. They begin to sin when they stop being children, and they continue to sin until they come to an understanding of what elements constitute the necessities of life, until the tablet is taken out of its hiding place and regarded in a clear light, until they find their position in relation to God, society and themselves. It is not until both are aware of the real significance of the tablet that they can stop sinning. The process of becoming aware of the significance of the tablet could only be achieved through sin, through being human. In order to realize that a superficial understanding of religion was not a sufficient basis for his life, Gregorius had to experience it and break away; in order to reject material wealth, he had to possess it; in order to get beyond the limitations of a restricted family relationship, he had to live through them. The second incest and the discovery of the tablet were necessary to bring about the realization of their 'sin' and to make it possible to get beyond it. Gregorius can now reject his former limited religious and social frameworks. He is able at last to see the full implications of êre and its particular significance for himself, to understand his relationship to got and the true nature of his dependence (rât) on others. His awareness of the full significance of the tablet--i.e., that as a human being he is guilty--makes his recognition of the real necessities of life, gedingen and vorhte, possible and finally brings

about his salvation.

Becoming aware of 'sin' is in a sense becoming aware of one's status as a human being. Gregorius' final elevation to pope symbolizes his full maturation as a human being--the conscious acceptance of his responsibility for others and for himself. The relationship with his mother at court was not a mature one, but it represented an essential stage in the process of growing up. It is only when he consciously severs this bond that he can begin to become aware of himself in relation to others and eventually assume the responsibilities of a father. In this state of self-awareness Gregorius is without sin. He is again a 'child of God' but his state of freedom from sin is no longer the innocence of childhood, which his mother seems to have regained, but the wisdom, understanding and acceptance of responsibility which characterizes full maturity.

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